SIR PATRICK MOORE AND THE FLYING SAUCERS FROM MARS

SWEDISH BONE SHAKER THE WOMAN WHO HAD SEX WITH SKELETONS

THE WILD DOG OF ENNERDALE A SHEEP-KILLING BEAST IN THE LAKES

TOTAL RECALL SYNDROME THE PEOPLE WHO REMEMBER EVERYTHING

THE WORLD'S WEIRDEST NEWS STORIES

PHANTOM HITCHHIKERS • SCOTTISH MERMAIDS • CANNIBAL FISHERMEN • CEMETERY DOGS

THE WORLD OF STRANGE PHENOMENA WWW.FORTEANTIMES.COM

ForteanTimes

FT298 MARCH 2013 £4.25

BIG HAIRY MONSTERS!

RUSSIA'S YETI

FAKE FOOTPRINTS, DODGY DNA AND THE SEARCH FOR THE SIBERIAN SNOWMAN

THE BIGFOOT OF TUNBRIDGE WELLS

IS AN APEMAN STALKING THE GARDEN OF ENGLAND?

NEW-AGE WILDMAN

SASQUATCH AND THE ANCIENT MASTERS OF LEMURIA

FORTEAN TIMES 298 • RUSSIAN BIGFOOT • THE WILD DOG OF ENNERDALE • KENTISH APEMAN • WOMAN WHO HAD SEX WITH SKELETONS • LEMURIAN SASQUATCH • CEMETERY DOGS • GHOSTS AND BEER • MARCH 2013

9 770308 569224 03

BASED ON REAL EVENTS

"RUTGER HAUER IS AWESOME... COLD, GRUFF, CALCULATING, AND UTTERLY BELIEVABLE"
DVD VERDICT

DOWNLOAD & ON DEMAND JANUARY 21ST
ON DVD & BLU-RAY FEBRUARY 4TH

ARROW FILMS

"CLAUSTROPHOBIC HEAT AND BROODING TENSION SEEP FROM THE SCREEN"
★★★★
CRAWL
WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY PAUL CHINA
CRAWL
EVERYTHING WAS GOING TO PLAN...
"RIVALS NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN IN GRITTY STYLE AND SUSPENSE"
DREAD CENTRAL

"CLAUSTROPHOBIC HEAT AND BROODING TENSION SEEP FROM THE SCREEN"

★★★★

ALAN JONES - FRIGHTFEST

"RIVALS *NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN* IN GRITTY STYLE AND SUSPENSE"
DREAD CENTRAL

DOWNLOAD & ON DEMAND FEBRUARY 21ST
IN SELECTED CINEMAS DVD & BLU-RAY
FEBRUARY 25TH

www.crawlthemovie.net

ARROW FILMS

/ArrowFilms **/arrowfilms**

ForteanTimes

Available on the iPhone App Store

CONTENTS

the world of strange phenomena

42 CEMETERY DOGS
Greyfriars Bobby wasn't the only canine to keep a celebrated graveside vigil

18 SPOOKS AND ALE
Why British ghosts prefer beer to spirits

JKEYSTONE / GETTY IMAGES

26 SIR PATRICK AND THE SAUCERS
The late astronomer's own UFO hoax

DR ROBERT M. SCHOCH

72 THE ENIGMA OF ÇATALHÖYÜK
Lost civilisations and the last Ice Age

76 THE SCOTTISH GIANT
The larger than life William Campbell

COVER IMAGE: ALEX TOMLINSON

Fortean Times 298

strange days

The woman who had sex with skeletons; Siberian fishing trip ends in cannibalism; the people who remember everything; phantom hitchhikers; Ritual Abuse in Cornwall; the Bigfoot of Tunbridge Wells – and much more.

14 SCIENCE
17 MYTHCONCEPTIONS
18 GHOSTWATCH
22 ARCHÆOLOGY
23 CLASSICAL CORNER
24 NECROLOG
25 STRANGE DEATHS
26 THE UFO FILES

features

COVER STORY

30 SNOWMAN'S LAND
For many years, research into Russia's hairy hominids was frowned upon by the Soviet authorities, but now all that has changed, as EDWARD CRABTREE reports from the Russian Federation, where a new appetite for the unexplained has seen the yeti's rehabilitation.

35 WATCHING THE FUR FLY
Are reports of Siberian Snowmen all that they seem, asks veteran Bigfooter LOREN COLEMAN – and what should we make of recent claims of giant footprints, Yeti hairs and DNA sequencing coming out of Russia?

36 THE WILD DOG OF ENNERDALE
In 1810, something deadly arrived in the Lake District and started killing sheep in a gruesome fashion. CRISPIN ANDREWS suggests that the fells were being stalked by a creature that was hungry and a long way from home....

42 CEMETERY DOGS
Greyfriars Bobby was by no means the only canine with a reputation for keeping vigil at his dead master's grave. JAN BONDESON looks at the forgotten career of Médor, the Dog of the Louvre, and other cemetery dogs.

reports

28 BLASTS FROM THE PAST
No. 43. Was Bigfoot an ancient Lemurian? by Ulrich Magin

72 FORTEAN TRAVELLER
No. 83. The Enigma of Çatalhöyük by Dr Robert M Schoch

76 STORIES FROM THE ILLUSTRATED POLICE NEWS
No. 19. The Scottish Giant by Jan Bondeson

forum

51 The end of a fishy tale by Alison and Gordon Rutter
52 The Imaginal College by Simon Wilson

regulars

02 EDITORIAL
50 SUBSCRIPTIONS
67 LETTERS
78 READER INFO
79 PHENOMENOMIX
80 TALES FROM THE VAULT

EDITOR
DAVID SUTTON
(drsutton@forteantimes.com)
FOUNDING EDITORS
BOB RICKARD (rickard@forteantimes.com)
PAUL SIEVEKING (sieveking@forteantimes.com)
ART DIRECTOR
ETIENNE GILFILLAN
(etienne@forteantimes.com)
BOOK REVIEWS EDITOR
VAL STEVENSON
(val@forteantimes.com)
RESIDENT CARTOONIST
HUNT EMERSON

SUBSCRIPTION ENQUIRIES AND BACK ISSUES
www.subsinfo.co.uk
ForteanTimes@servicehelpline.co.uk

FORTEAN TIMES is produced for Dennis Publishing by Wild Talents Ltd. Postal address: Fortean Times, PO BOX 71602, London E17 0QD.

You can manage your existing subscription through http://www.subsinfo.co.uk/ – this should be your first port of call if you have any queries about your subscription.

Change your address, renew your subscription or report problems
UK subscriptions: 0844 844 0049
USA & Canada subscriptions: (+1) 888-428-6676
Fax (+1) 757-428-6253 email cs@imsnews.com
Other overseas subscriptions: +44 (0)1795 592 909
Fax: +44 (0)1795 414 555

LICENSING & SYNDICATION
FORTEAN TIMES IS AVAILABLE FOR INTERNATIONAL LICENSING AND SYNDICATION – CONTACT:
Syndication Senior Manager
ANJ DOSAJ-HALAI TEL: +44- (0) 20 7907 6132
Anj_Dosaj-Halai@dennis.co.uk
Licensing Manager
CARLOTTA SERANTONI TEL: +44- (0) 20 7907 6550
Carlotta_Serantoni@dennis.co.uk
Licensing & Syndication Assistant
NICOLE ADAMS TEL: +44- (0) 20 7907 6134
Nicole_Adams@dennis.co.uk

YOU CAN REACH FT ON THE INTERNET
www.forteantimes.com

PUBLISHED BY
DENNIS PUBLISHING,
30 Cleveland Street
London W1T 4JD, UK Tel: 020 7907 6000
GROUP PUBLISHER
PAUL RAYNER: 020 7907 6663
paul_rayner@dennis.co.uk
CIRCULATION MANAGER
james.mangan@seymour.co.uk
EXPORT CIRCULATION MANAGER
gareth.viggers@seymour.co.uk
SENIOR PRODUCTION EXECUTIVE
EBONY BESAGNI: 020 7907 6060
ebony_besagni@dennis.co.uk
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
SOPHIE VALENTINE: 020 7907 6057
sophie_valentine@dennis.co.uk

DEPUTY ADVERTISING MANAGER
CIARAN SCARRY
020 7907 6683
ciaran_scarry@dennis.co.uk

CLASSIFIED SALES EXECUTIVE
RYAN GISBORNE WEAR
020 7907 6763
ryan_gw@dennis.co.uk

PRINTED BY BENHAM GOODHEAD PRINT LTD

DISTRIBUTION
Distributed in UK, Ireland and worldwide
by Seymour Distribution Ltd.
2 East Poultry Avenue, London EC1A 9PT
Tel: 020 7429 4000 / Fax: 020 7429 4001
Queries on overseas availability should be emailed to info@seymour.co.uk
Speciality store distribution by Worldwide Magazine Distribution Ltd, Tel: 0121 788 3112 Fax: 0121 7881272

STANDARD SUBSCRIPTION RATES
12 issues: UK £39.98; EU £47.50;
REST OF THE WORLD £55; US $79.99 ($143.98 for 24 issues)

Fortean Times (USPS 023-226) is published every four weeks by Dennis Publishing Ltd, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1P 4JD, United Kingdom. The US annual subscription price is $79.99.
Airfreight and mailing in the USA is by Agent named Air Business, C/O Worldnet Shipping USA Inc., 149-35 177th Street, Jamaica, New York, 11434.
Periodical postage paid at Jamaica, NY 11431, USA.
US Postmaster: Send address changes to: Fortean Times, 3330 Pacific Avenue, Suite 404, Virginia Beach, VA, 23451-2983, USA.

DENNIS PUBLISHING LIMITED
GROUP FINANCE DIRECTOR IAN LEGGETT
FINANCE DIRECTOR BRETT REYNOLDS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KERIN O'CONNOR
CHIEF EXECUTIVE JAMES TYE
CHAIRMAN FELIX DENNIS

ABC Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations.
Circulation 17,024 (Jan-Dec 2011)

Printed in the UK. ISSN: 0308 5899
© Fortean Times: JANUARY 2013

editorial

Bigfootery or tomfoolery?

FROM RUSSIA TO TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Recent months have seen a flurry of manimal news, with some astonishing claims being made about Yeti hair samples, the sequencing of Bigfoot DNA and the presence of an eight-foot-tall hairy monster with glowing red eyes in the genteel Kentish town of Tunbridge Wells. The 'Tunbridge Wells Bigfoot' seems to have arisen out of a process of Chinese Whispers, as Neil Arnold explains (pp16-17), although he also points out that this isn't the only example of an apeman being sighted in the Garden of England.

Edward Crabtree writes from Tatarstan on the post-Soviet Russian Federation's newfound enthusiasm (backed by politicians, including Vladimir Putin) for its manimals (pp30-34), while veteran Bigfoot authority Loren Coleman takes a critical look at the way new research from Russia has been touted, leaked and argued over online through the new social media (p35).

As Loren reports, it would seem that much of the 'research' emerging from Russia concerning the 'Siberian Snowman' – including video, footprints and hair samples – is being manipulated in the interests of bringing Western Bigfoot researchers and, more importantly, tourists to the region. Our good friend Sharon Hill (over at doubtfulnews.com) has alerted us to the latest shenanigans in Siberia. Not content with launching a 'Yeti Day', the Kemerovo region is now planning a Yeti holiday resort according to a recent press release: "A village dedicated to the mysterious Bigfoot, or Yeti, will appear at the mountain ski resort of Sheregesh in South Siberia. Adjoining one of the hotel compounds will be a Yeti-park with a separate house for the relict hominid… 'Visitors will be able to see Bigfoot with their own eyes and even communicate with it,' deputy head of the Sheregesh administration Igor Idimeshev told the *Voice of Russia*.

'We will organise a Yeti-park with a museum where natural proofs of Bigfoot's existence will be exhibited such as trees arch-woven by Yeti, and lots of other things.'"

A Yeti park next to a ski resort? Haven't these people ever seen *Snowbeast*?

"Hey! Where's my shampoo?"

MARTIN ROSS

FAWLTEAN TOWERS?

Some of you may have been wondering what happened to the 'Letters from Cambodia' series by our one-time staffer Jen Ogilvie, in which, having run away to Cambodia to seek her fortune, she explored the country's history, religious beliefs and odder traditions. Well, it seems that since late last year she has had very little time for researching and writing, having been involved in setting up some kind of bed and breakfast establishment for travellers to the country! We wish her well in this surprising venture – but can't help wondering whether she is fully prepared for her future fame as the female Basil Fawlty of South East Asia. More news from Cambodia as we get it…

ERRATA

FT295:18-19
Horror writer and sometime FT contributor Steve Volk wrote in to correct an error in Alan Murdie's column: "James Herbert's parapsychologist is called David Ash, not 'James Ash' per your Ghostwatch article. David Ash featured in the novels *Haunted*, *The Ghosts of Sleath* and *Ash*, whereas I have it on good authority that the BBC television adaptation of *The Secret of Crickley Hall* featured a parapsychologist called 'Gordon Pyke' (I didn't watch it myself)."

FT297:53
In his forum piece on the folklore of the ash tree, John Reppion referred to the tradition of "ritual entombment of a rodent" practised by farmers concerned about the "evil powers" of shrews or shrew mice. Jacqueline Houtved of Reading wrote in to point out that John had made a classificatory slip-up: "I have to point out that there is a small and very commonly made error in the otherwise lovely (and encouraging!) Forum article about the Lightning Tree: Shrews are not rodents, but insectivores closely related to moles and belonging to the order of Soricomorpha."

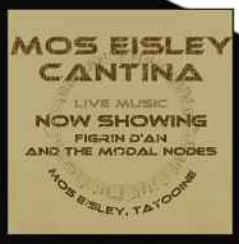
DAVID SUTTON
BOB RICKARD
PAUL SIEVEKING

NERDOH SALE

ALWAYS WORTH SHOUTING ABOUT

15% OFF - CODE FT1512 ENDS 28/02/13

PHONE ORDERS
0115 8440088
VISA MasterCard



NERDOH.COM

ALWAYS FREE UK P&P

strangedays

The Swedish bone shaker

37-year-old Swedish woman accused of "disturbing the peace of the dead" for sexual gratification

SWEDISH POLICE FORCE

LEFT: The unnamed 37-year-old woman and some of the photographs found by the Swedish police.

A woman in Sweden has been accused of masturbating with human bones. On 20 November, the unnamed and unemployed 37-year-old brunette was charged with *brut mot griftesfriden* (disturbing the peace of the dead), using the bones as self-pleasuring aids. She adamantly denied the charge and demanded to be released and reunited with her bone collection. Prosecutor Kristina Ehrenborg-Staffas claimed the human remains were used in an "unethical" way. "She has a lot of photos of morgues and chapels, and documents about how to have sex with recently deceased and otherwise dead people," she said.

The woman's behaviour was revealed when police investigated reports of gunfire coming from her flat in Gothenburg last September. "You should have been here last week," she told the police. "Then I had 20 skulls." She had allegedly sold three skulls and a spine to an artist in Uppsala last summer. Evidence for the prosecution included CDs labelled "My necrophilia" and "My first experience". Photos released by the police show a woman licking and caressing skulls, and a skull tucked up in bed (though the accused said the woman in the photographs was not her). She had 397 bones, including 15 skulls (one of which was found in a freezer), 13 teeth and a spine. Though she claimed the bones were very old, most were thought to belong to people who were born in the 1940s and 1950s. The police also found the access code to a local morgue, a drill and body bags – but no evidence that the woman was a grave robber.

She was said to be psychologically able to stand trial and was expected to plead not guilty, claiming that she was interested in history and archæology, and that she "collected the remains [buying them online] like other people might collect stamps." Some years ago, according to the local newspaper *Goeteborgsposten*, she posted on an Internet forum: "My morals set my limits and I'm prepared to take the punishment if something should happen. It's worth it. I want my man like he is, whether he is dead or alive. He allows me to find sexual happiness on the side." In 2004, she allegedly posted on the controversial Swedish online forum Flashback: "I have access to a large collection of pictures of dead people and am considering starting a pornographic website with sensual images of beautiful corpses (men and women) in sexual contexts. The idea is that visitors would be able to contribute with their own pictures, etc. Today, there doesn't appear to be any similar site which features erotica with death and the beauty of corpses."

On 17 December, the Gothenburg District Court convicted her of disturbing the peace of the dead, as well as weapons offences. She risked a two-year jail sentence, but escaped with probation and was ordered to undergo treatment for addiction and psychiatric problems. *The Local (Sweden), 20+27+30 Nov, 17 Dec; [R] 21 Nov; (Sydney) D.Telegraph, D.Mail, Duster, 22 Nov; Sun, 22+23 Nov; TNT magazine, 26 Nov 2012.*

LADY IN THE WINDOW
BVM cheers the faithful at a Malaysian hospital
PAGE 6

CORNISH CULTISTS
White Witches are charged with ritual child abuse
PAGE 8

GHOSTS ON THE ROAD
A pyschological explanation for phantom hitchhikers?
PAGE 14

Ravenous Russians

A Siberian fishing trip goes horribly wrong and ends in cannibalism

Last July, Alexei Gorulenko/ Gradulenko (35) and his best friend Andrei Kurochina/ Kurochkin (44) both senior managers in cement plants, left Volsk in southern Russia and drove 4,300 miles (6,900km) to the Yakutia region for a spot of fishing. Here they were joined by Alexander Abdullayev (37) an unemployed carpenter, and Viktor Komarov (47), a welder and former gold miner. On 8 August, the four set out from Pervomaiskiy via Dipkun to the Sutam River in Sakha, a remote taiga (forest) region. In late September, they lost everything, apart from their guns and money, when their vehicle sank in the swollen Tarynnakh River. They held out in hunters' lodges for a few weeks, but the winter snows began in early October and they got lost trying to walk south, ending up at a hunters' lodge by the Daurka River, surviving on moss and sawdust.

RUSSIAN EMERGENCY MINISTRY

ABOVE: Alexei Gorulenko (or Gradulenko) and Alexander Abdullayev (or Abdullaev).

On 28 November, Gorulenko and Abdullayev were found nine miles (14km) from Dipkun and flown out by helicopter. Police visited the Daurka River lodge, where nearby they found Kurochina's frozen body parts under a snow pile, bloodstained clothing and a wooden stake that could have been a murder weapon. "We didn't kill him," Abdullayev insisted. He said that Kurochina had frozen to death after injuring his leg and that he and Gorulenko chopped up his frozen remains, surviving for 10 days on his flesh. Gorulenko has yet to confess to any part in his friend's death; Komarov is still missing.

As cannibalism is not an offence in Russia, no one was arrested, but this will change if the results of forensic tests, expected next March, indicate murder. *Sun, 16 Dec; Mail on Sunday, 23 Dec 2012.*

EXTRA! EXTRA!

FT'S FAVOURITE HEADLINES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Dead man 'thrilled at first grandchild'

Bradford Telegraph & Argus, 19 July 2012.

Fish concert to support flood damaged bistro

East Lothian News, 31 Aug 2012.

PROMISCUOUS SQUID SWIM MORE SLOWLY AFTER SEX

BBC News, --28 July 2012.

Hundreds of fairies to attempt world record

Stamford Mercury, 17 Aug 2012.

Stone man gives talk

Hartlepool Mail, 31 Aug 2012.

Itching horse in need of pyjamas

Wolverhampton Express & Star, 14 Aug 2012.

Faceless men turn on the Greens

The Weekend Australian, 7-8 July 2012.

Gas body will have teeth

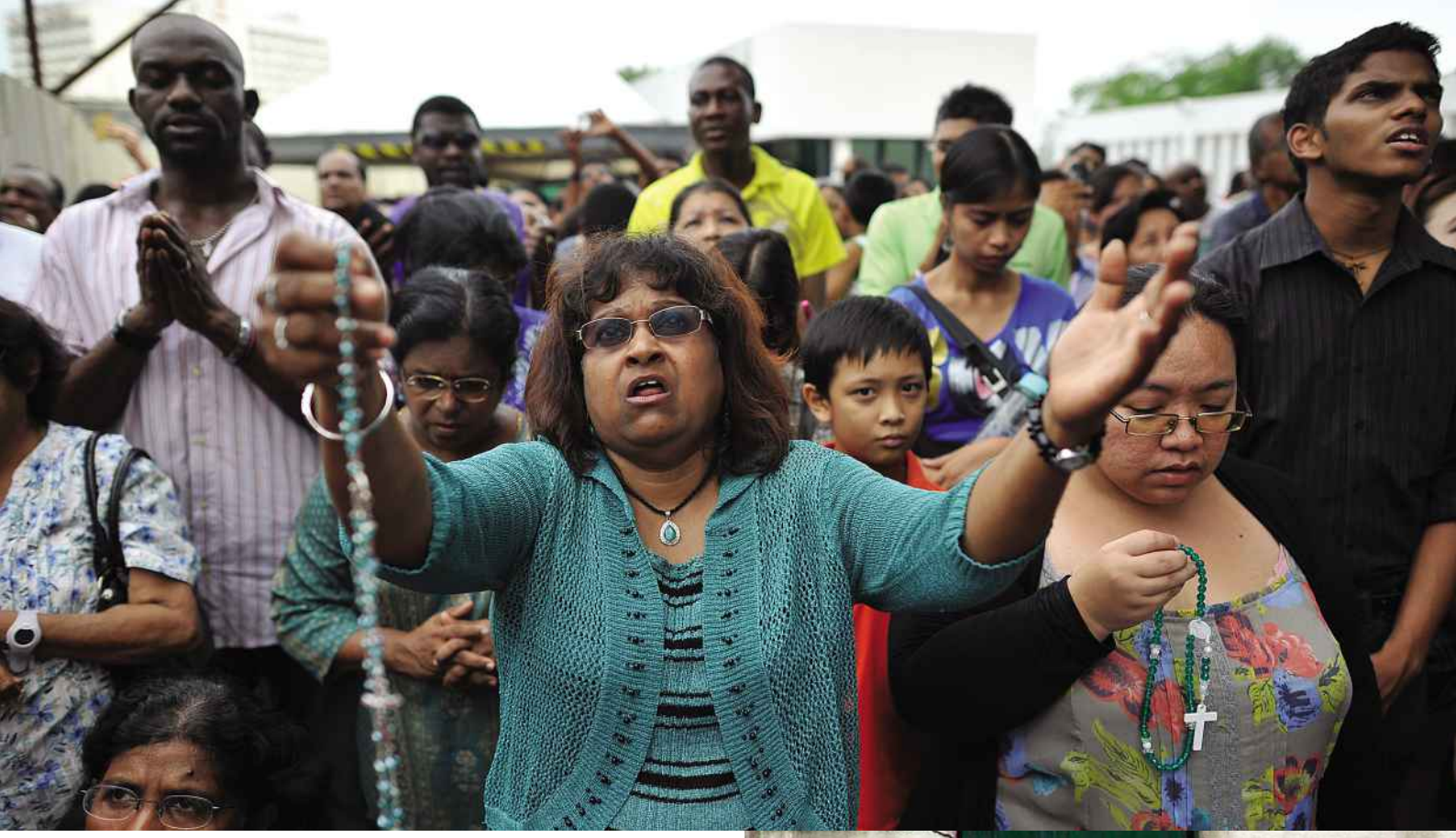
(Queensland) Courier.Mail, 17 Aug 2012.

Ghost revisits zombie victims

D.Mail, 24 Aug 2012.

Missing head of poet found after public appeal

Irish Times, 18 July 2012.



MADONNA OF THE WINDOW

Roman Catholics in Malaysia have hailed as a miracle what they take to be a simulacrum of the Blessed Virgin Mary on the seventh-floor window of the Sime Darby Medical Centre in Subang Jaya, just outside the capital, Kuala Lumpur. It was first seen by a window cleaner, who allegedly was unable to wipe it off. About 2,000 people were coming to see it every day to pray, sing hymns and light candles – including the sick hoping for a cure. The image went viral after being reproduced on social networking websites. Many visitors said they could also see a crucified Christ portrayed on a window two panes below. On 20 November, after about two weeks, the windowpane bearing the BVM acheropite was moved to the Marian Church of Our Lady of Lourdes in the port town of Klang. The Catholic authorities withheld comment until the image had been "tested" – whatever that might entail. About nine per cent of Malaysia's 29 million people are Christians. *D.Mail, 12 Nov; [AFP] 13+20 Nov; Malaysian Insider, 29 Nov 2012.* PHOTOS: AFP / GETTY IMAGES

PLEASE DO NOT
LIGHT CANDLES
IN THE CHAPEL

SIDELINES...

CATCH A FALLING STAR(FISH)

Julie Anne Gilburt, 39, stepped outside her art gallery on the seafront in Brighton, East Sussex, and was hit on the head by an orange starfish. "I thought it might be the stormy weather, or that it was dropped by a seagull," she said. The starfish was still alive and was returned to the sea. *D.Mirror, 4 Dec 2012*.

OUR NEXT HOME?

A planet able to support life is one of five orbiting our Sun's twin, Tau Ceti, 12 light years away, a star visible to the naked eye. The planet is about five times Earth's mass and lies in the star's 'Goldilocks zone' – the orbital region neither too hot nor too cold to allow liquid surface water. *D.Telegraph, 20 Dec 2012*.

SURREAL TRICK

Amanda Lear, the French singer, has revealed that when Yoko Ono requested a hair from Salvador Dalí's moustache, the Surrealist showman, fearing that Ono was a witch who might use it to cast a spell, sent her instead a blade of dried grass from his garden – while pocketing her cheque for $10,000 (£6,200). "Dalí could never resist the lure of a cheque," said Lear. *D.Telegraph, 4 Dec 2012*.

FELINE CRIME

A trap set up to catch an office thief caught a real cat burglar. The camera filmed a Burmese cat nabbing cash and hiding it at an animal shelter in Swinoujscie, Poland. *Metro, 25 Oct 2012*.

MARTIN ROSS

'White witches' jailed

Children sexually abused under the guise of pagan rituals

After decades of false accusations of "ritual child abuse" [**FT57** in 1991, etc, etc] comes an apparently genuine case, admittedly without the more spectacular features – brood mares, child sacrifice, cannibalism etc – dreamed up by fantasy-prone evangelical social workers and their ilk.

In Truro Crown Court in Cornwall on 14 December, two self-styled "white witches", once members of a coven in Falmouth, were given long prison sentences. Judge Graham Cottle said that both the accused had "a lifelong sexual interest in young female children… The offences range from the extremely serious to the truly horrifying." He added that many of the pair's victims had little prospect of recovering from their experiences and had suffered years of emotional problems, including flashbacks.

Peter Petrauske, 72, who described himself as the high priest of a coven in St Ives, was jailed for 18 years for rape and indecent assault, while ex-tin miner Jack Kemp, 69, was given 14 years for indecent assault and sexual activity with a child. The offenses came to light when Kemp was arrested over a sexual assault (unconnected to Petrauske) in 2011, and alleged victims contacted detectives. At Petrauske's house, police discovered daggers, a whip, candles, incense – and lavender (!). In the 1970s and 1980s, the two men and their associates preyed on girls under the guise of pagan rituals.

Their victims, aged from three to 15, were plied with drink and made to strip off and dance. They were sometimes tied up and blindfolded before being abused by men dressed in ceremonial robes. One had a dagger drawn across her body and another had hot wax poured on her. The girls were given money and sweets to buy their silence.

LEFT: The late Peter Solheim at Merryn stone circle, Cornwall. **BELOW**: Peter Petrauske.

SWNS GROUP

Petrauske described himself as the high priest

Petrauske was backed up in court by female members of his coven who said that while children were occasionally present, nudity never played a part in the ceremonies. One female friend also described him as "a gentleman". Kemp denied any involvement in paganism, saying it "wasn't his cup of tea", and claimed he was the victim of a bizarre conspiracy. He said the girls were wrong to name him in the case. During the three-week trial, it was alleged that the coven's victims were also abused by the late notorious Cornish pædophile Stan Pirie and local councillor Peter Solheim, whose axe-mutilated body was found five miles (8km) off the Lizard Peninsula in 2004. It was said at the time that Solheim had initially joined a Druid sect in St Merryn, Cornwall, taking part in rituals such as dancing round stone circles; but he drifted away into black magic and Satanism and left the sect in 1999 [**FT191:23**]. His partner Margaret James was jailed for at least 20 years in 2006 for plotting his death after becoming jealous when he had an affair, though police are still searching for her accomplices. *BBC News, 27 Nov, 12+14 Dec; D.Telegraph, 29 Nov; D.Mail, Sun, 29 Nov, 15 Dec 2012.*

Brain burglar rumbled

Fantasist guru fleeces aristocratic French family of millions

A French conman dubbed "the Leonardo of mental manipulation" was jailed for eight years on 13 November 2012 for brainwashing a family of French aristocrats and fleecing them of their £3.6 million fortune. Thierry Tilly, 48, convinced 11 members of the de Védrines family that they were the lost descendants of an ancient society called "The Balance of the World" who were in mortal danger from Freemasons, a European secret society… and pædophiles. For six years, terrified they would be killed, they barricaded themselves inside their ancestral home, Château Martel, near Monflanquin, a pretty mediæval village in the Lot-et-Garonne, 100 miles (160km) east of Bordeaux. Tilly claimed he was a NATO "master spy" and financial genius in direct contact with the US President, whose job was to protect them from their enemies. His many spurious claims during his trial included descent from the Hapsburgs, that he once almost played football for Marseille, and that his parents were a combat swimmer and an Olympic ice skater. He told the court he was a Catholic and appeared to dismiss "them" – the de Védrines family – as only Protestants. He insisted that the family had acted willingly and that he had lost money trying to help what he described as a "gang of resentful, greedy, provincial aristocrats". His lawyer Alexandre Novion described him as being "twenty thousand leagues under the real world". He asked for clemency on the grounds that his client was "probably slightly deranged".

Tilly was a law school dropout and failed businessman with a conviction for fraud. His first victim from the de Védrines family was Ghislaine, 58 (or 66 or 56), whom he met as an employee of her Paris secretarial college in 1999. After barely registering the "uncharismatic" man for the first year, she gradually found herself drawn to him and introduced him to her relations. He became the family's guru, ingratiating himself with three generations, including Guillemette de Védrines, the family matriarch who died in 2010 aged 97; her three children Ghislaine, Philippe, 64, an executive with Shell, and Charles-Henri, 54, a gynæcologist and local politician; the two brothers' wives, Brigitte and Christine; and five adult grandchildren. Tilly claimed they were protected by a global network of secretive grandees, whose head, Jacques Gonzales, 65, was a cousin of King Juan Carlos of Spain. Funds from their property, savings and jewellery were funnelled into a Canadian "charity" set up to pay their "protectors" and run by Gonzales. (The latter was arrested in 2010 and jailed for four years on charges of complicity and deception.)

As French authorities started closing in on Tilly in 2006, he convinced eight members of the family to decamp to Oxford, where he was based, and accept low-paid jobs as gardeners and kitchen workers. They often failed to pay rent and were taken to court. Anyone who resisted Tilly's diktats was punished severely. Christine de Védrines, 62, says she was locked in a room for several months, deprived of food and beaten. Tilly insisted she knew the number of a bank account that would lead to the lost treasure of the Knights Templar. When Ghislaine's husband, journalist Jean Marchand, denounced Tilly as a charlatan, he was banished and accused by his wife and brothers-in-law of belonging to a "network of evil". Marchand alerted the authorities, who refused to act because there were no legal complaints from the rest of the family. Then in March 2009, Christine escaped after confiding in her employer in Oxford. She returned to France and went to the police. Tilly was arrested in France (or Switzerland) the following October.

In an article in *Vanity Fair* in 2010, Jean Marchand described Tilly as a sort of "brain burglar": "He opened their heads, took out their brains and put in a new one." His wife Ghislaine said: "He kidnapped us by turning us against one another. We were scared of everyone and everything. We were so paranoid that we could no longer think straight."

Spouses and other relatives were baffled by the fact that Tilly didn't have to be physically present to control his victims. Once his domination was established, he issued most of his orders by telephone or email from Oxford. "From time to time, each of us rebelled in turn," said Ghislaine, "but the others would put us back on the straight and narrow." *D.Telegraph, Independent, Guardian, 25 Sept, 14 Nov 2012.*

JEAN-PIERRE MULLER / AFP / GETTY IMAGES

LEFT: Members of the de Védrines family leave the courthouse in Bordeaux.

SIDELINES...

PREMIER POISONED

Turkey's former president Turgut Özal, 65, was assassinated, it appears. He died while in office in 1993, officially from a "heart attack" – but his body has been exhumed and found to contain DDT, cadmium, americium and polonium. His wife Semra claims he was killed by drinking spiked lemonade at the Bulgarian Embassy in Ankara. *Sun, 26 Nov 2012.*

BOVINE ROMANCE

Lilli the cow, who became famous in Switzerland last February after being born with six legs, found love last summer. She and a bull called Liliput became inseparable at an animal sanctuary in Salzburg. *Metro, 31 July 2012.*

CHEEKY MONKEYS

Railway staff are offering a £300 reward to anyone who can catch monkeys stealing food and mobile phones from passengers as they board trains in Chittorgarh, Rajasthan. *Sun, Metro, 12 Nov 2012.*

GIANT HAIL

Southeast Queensland was pelted with record-breaking hailstones, 4-6cm (1.6-2.4in) in diameter, during a thunderstorm on 18 November. The biggest of all – up to 9cm (3.5in) across – fell on the Brisbane suburb of Toowong at 6pm. *Gold Coast Bulletin, 19 Nov 2012.*

MARTIN ROSS

SIDELINES...

WAKEY WAKEY!

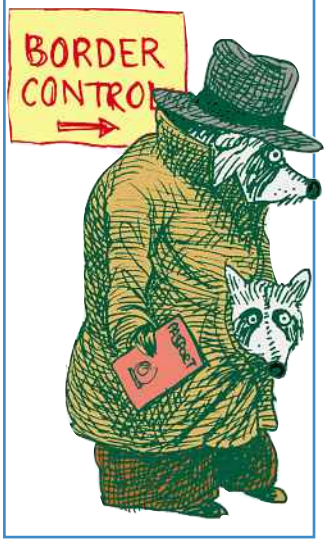
David Loudon, 54, was fined £1,375 with nine penalty points after falling asleep at the wheel of his lorry on the A74(M) near Johnstonebridge, Dumfries and Galloway, in March 2011 – and hitting a sign warning "Tiredness Can Kill". *Times, 26 April 2012.*

FISHING JACKPOT

In mid-August, a fisherman caught a critically endangered but hugely prized fish off the coast of Fujian province in China. A local fishmonger paid him three million yuan (£300,000) for the 176lb (80kg) Chinese Bahaba or Giant Yellow Croaker, or £1,700 a pound. The fish is prized for its swim bladder, which is said to cure heart and lung ailments. *D.Telegraph, 22 Aug 2012.*

RACCOONS RULE

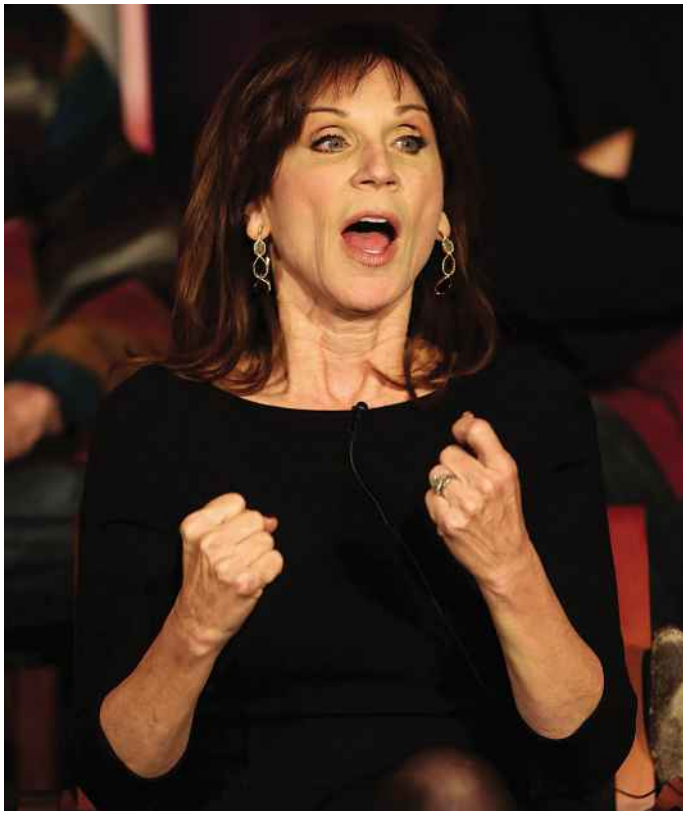
Cold weather in Germany has led to housebreaking by raccoons in search of food and shelter. The North American mammals arrived in the 1920s, imported to Germany for their fur; then in 1934, Goering ordered the release of a breeding pair to give hunters something to shoot. More got out in 1945 when an Allied bomb hit a Nazi raccoon farm. Half a million now occupy Europe from Scandinavia, across the Alps into southern Europe. Better guard the Channel Tunnel! *D.Mail, 14 Aug; Metro, 29 Oct 2012.*



MARTIN ROSS

MEDICAL BAG

SUPER-REMEMBERERS RECALL THOUSANDS OF FACES; FACE BLINDNESS SUFFERERS CAN'T RECOGNISE THEMSELVES



GETTY IMAGES

LEFT: Hyperthymesiac actress Marilu Henner remembers every day of her past. **RIGHT:** Fellow super-rememberer and violinist Louise Owen

TOTAL RECALL

Jill Price, 46, a widow who works as a school administrator in Los Angeles, remembers every detail of her life every day since 1980 – what time she got up, whom she met, what she did, and what she ate, as well as the main news stories of the day. In 2000, she approached Professor James McGaugh, director of the Center for Neurobiology of Learning and Memory at the University of California at Irvine, writing to him: "My memory is too strong. It's like a running movie that never stops. Most call it a gift, but I call it a burden. I run my entire life through my head every day and it drives me crazy!" She sees life on a split screen: "One side is today. On the other, half a dozen times a day, cued by a smell or a song, I am swept back to a past event, happy or not. I cannot sleep well. Over the years it has eaten me up." After running a battery of tests, the astonished professor coined a new term to describe her condition – hyperthymestic syndrome, from the Greek hyper (more than normal) and thymesis (remembering) [**FT214:11**].

The 2006 report on her wild talent in the medical journal *Neurocase* referred to her as 'AJ' to protect her identity, until she spoke publically for the first time in 2008 – by which time Prof McGaugh had discovered five other adults with similar powers and 50 more 'possibles'. He said MRI scans indicated their brains were a slightly different shape from normal. Also, Price and three of the other five are left-handed, and they all collect things on a grand scale, such as TV guides, old films and theatre programmes. Price has co-written a book with Bart Davis called *The Woman Who Can't Forget* (Free Press). *D.Mail, 9 May; (Queensland) Weekend Bulletin, 17–18 May 2008.*

Marilu Henner, 60, a Broadway actress who played Elaine O'Connor Nardo in the American television comedy *Taxi* during the late 1970s and early 1980s, is another person with "superior autobiographical memory", recalling every day of the past 48 years as if it were yesterday. She also appears to recall entire days from when she was 18 months old, playing with an older brother in her Chicago home, thus confounding experts who believe that children are fogged in 'infantile amnesia' until they are at least two and a half. Psychologists believe most people recall about 250 faces during a lifetime, but Henner suspects she can recall thousands.

Another hyperthymesiac is Louise Owen, 39, a New York violinist, who can recall every day since she was 11 years old; more super-rememberers were expected to emerge in 2011 because of a new CBS TV drama series called *Unforgettable*, featuring a detective, played by Poppy Montgomery, who displays a 'freakish' gift for recall. Her appearance and character were based on Henner, who was a consultant on the series. "When someone asks me about a date, a particular day, it's like I'm looking for a scene on a DVD playing before me," she said. "In a second I'm back there, looking through my own eyes at the scene as I saw it back in 1980 or whenever. I can focus in on details, like the title of a book." By mid-2012, 33 hyperthymesiacs had been identified.

Aurélian Hayman, 20, a student at Durham University, is another person blessed (or cursed) with total recall – so far, the only Briton recognised as a hyperthymesiac. His early childhood memories are "vague recollections" like those of almost everyone, but things changed around the age of 11. (Alternatively, he "can summon every detail of every day of his life since he was four", according to a newspaper caption.) When asked about the random date of 1 October 2006, Aurélian remembers it was a cloudy Sunday, he listened to the song 'When You

DAN BRINZAC / SPLASH NEWS

Were Young' by The Killers, and he had asked out a girl but she turned him down. On the day before he was wearing a blue T-shirt and saw the girl who would later rebuff him in the city centre of his native Cardiff. Aurélian's amazing talent was showcased in the Channel 4 documentary *The Boy Who Can't Forget*, on 25 September 2012.

In the 1950s, psychologists argued that everything happening to us passes from short-term to long-term memory, and that the brain has limitless ability to remember; but in recent decades most neurologists have come to believe that long-term memory is quite selective and mutable over time. However, cases of hyperthymestic syndrome challenge this orthodox view. "This condition [indicates] our memory is more or less infinite and that suggests there is a lot more to discover," said Prof Giuliana Mazzoni, head of psychology at Hull University and one of Britain's leading experts on memory.

"The other big surprise from this type of condition is that it confirms a very old view of memory – that it is reproductive; that events are encoded in memory in a literal way." MX *News (Sydney), 21 Dec 2010; Sunday Times, 2 Oct; D.Mail, 3 Oct 2011; D.Mirror, 1 Aug; Sun, 3 Aug; D.Mail, Metro, 24 Sept 2012.*

AND YOU ARE..?

Sisters Donna Jones and Victoria Wardley from York suffer from an extreme form of prosopagnosia, or "face blindness"; they don't even know each other when they meet. The condition reportedly affects one in every 50 people, but little is understood about its causes. Mrs Wardley, 32, a dog groomer, can't describe the face of her husband Matthew. "I can make out an eye or a nose, but when I try and look at a whole face it just doesn't work," she said. "It's like a blank canvas on someone's head. People will come up to me who I've known for years, but until they introduce themselves I have no idea who they are. We rarely take any pictures because there's no point – we'd have no idea who was in the photo."

She was diagnosed by chance a few years ago when her doctor came into the coffee shop where she worked and she failed to recognise him. Her 30-year-old sister then realised she also had the condition, which can run in families.

Ms Jones, an office worker, has a 14-year-old daughter whom she can't pick out in a crowd. Face blindness makes the relationship with her partner Paul Williams, 40, forever fresh. "When I saw him for the first time I immediately thought that he looked like a lovely person, and every time I look at him I still get that feeling," she said. However, she added: "I've gone up to men in supermarkets thinking they were my partner, only to realise I'd grabbed hold of the wrong man."

Growing up, the sisters found ways to recognise their parents. "My mum wore bright neon colours all the time, and she always made my dad wear homemade knitted jumpers so it was easy to spot them in a crowd," said Ms Jones. "Dad had waist-length hair too." However, on one hiking trip when everyone was wearing similar outdoor clothing, the younger sister walked off with the wrong family.

The biggest problem comes with recognising themselves. Ms Jones recalls stepping from side to side repeatedly to avoid a woman in a corridor, only to discover she was trying to walk into a mirror. And while Mrs Wardley was a bar manager, she shouted at a woman standing in her way as she carried empty glasses before realising she was arguing with her own reflection. *Metro, 24 Oct; D.Mail, 25 Oct 2012.*

TOM DEECKEN / CATERS NEWS AGENCY LTD

ABOVE: Donna Jones (left) and Victoria Wardley do not recognise themselves

SIDELINES...

LARGEST METEORITE

Possibly the largest meteorite ever to hit Britain has been identified. The 198lb (90kg) rock fell to Earth 30,000 years ago and was preserved during the last Ice Age before being built into a burial mound. Excavated in the 19th century, it sat for at least 80 years on the front doorstep of Lake House near Salisbury, Wiltshire, latterly the home of Sting. For the last 20 years it has been stored in London's Natural History Museum, where it was identified by Prof Colin Pillinger. *Guardian, 13 Sept 2012.*

EX IN ATTIC

A woman from South Carolina discovered her boyfriend from 12 years ago had secretly moved into her attic and was sleeping in a heating duct. The mother of five found her ex after she heard animal-like noises in the ceiling above her bedroom. The man, who allegedly had drug problems, fled before the police arrived. *MX News (Sydney), 12 Sept 2012.*

NO NOOSE IS GOOD NOOSE

Former nurse Christine Hall, 54, from Cleveleys, Lancashire, was handed an anti-social behaviour order after roaming the streets with a noose around her neck and accusing neighbours of leaving dead mice on her doorstep. She also accused a couple of poisoning her dog and would creep up on approaching cars and shout "I'm coming to get you!" Neighbours dubbed her "The Witch of Kettiwake Close". *D.Telegraph, 22 Sept 2012.*

REPENTANT FOX

Jeremy Clark, 38, of Burgess Hill, near Brighton, West Sussex, was standing in a car park preparing to go to hospital with his wife Anna, 35, when a fox stole Anna's handbag and ran into some bushes. A few minutes later it crept back with its tail between its legs and dropped the bag at her feet before running off. *web.orange.co.uk, 26 Oct 2012.*

SIDELINES...

ORGAN RECYCLING

Kidney donor Manju Tahki, 26, demanded her organ back after telling police in Kochi, Kerala, India, that her husband had run off with the £12,000 she was paid for it. *Sun, 14 Nov 2012.*

BANG BANG

Natural Hunka Kaboom caused panic in Akron, Ohio, after leaving his aluminium walking stick engraved with his name outside the city hall. Mr Kaboom, 65, said he was unaware of the evacuation until reporters contacted him. He legally changed his name to Kaboom in 2009 from James Louis Krosner – although he had used the moniker for years as a way to promote his former pest control business. *(Brisbane) Courier Mail, 5 Oct 2012.*

JUST THE MAN

The Canal and River Trust have clearly chosen the right man to help fix leaks in southeast England's waterways – Mr Lee King. *Sun, 19 Dec 2012.*

SAVE THE DUCKS!

Justina Laniewski jumped into a raging creek in Pennsylvania during a storm to "save" several dozen wild ducks. Her child tried to follow her into the water but was pulled out of harm's way by a neighbour. Firemen rescued Ms Laniewski from the neck-high waters. A breath test showed her alcohol level was twice the legal limit for driving and she faced charges including risking a catastrophe. *D.Telegraph, 31 Oct 2012.*

A FRIEND IN NEED

When Lance Corporal Craig Turley, 28, was wounded by a grenade blast in Afghanistan on 23 September 2011, Lance Corporal Scott Townson, an army medic nicknamed Ringer, tended a severed artery and stemmed his bleeding. A year later to the day, Turley was bitten by a deadly cobra on exercises in Kenya. He began having convulsions, but Ringer was there with anti-venom and saved his life again. He will be Turley's best man when he marries next April. *Sun, 14 Oct 2012.*

OFF-STREET PARKING

This car was spotted on the balcony of a third floor apartment, 60 ft (18m) up, in Kiev, the Ukraininan capital. How it got there – and how the owner planned to get it down – was a mystery. *Metro, 8 Oct 2012.*

EAST NEWS / REX FEATURES

The PRANA Talisman

ADVERTISEMENT

How does **PRANA** work? The way traditional magic has always worked!...

With very little time and effort, the Prana Talisman can provide its owner with the inner power to achieve any positive goals that they wish, however ambitious! Centuries of wisdom, knowledge and practice have percolated down from the scholars and mystics of the ancient world, and now their legacy can be revealed and offered to you, in the form of the Prana.

Here is the most important aspect; the Prana will remain nothing more than an interesting metal pendant displaying some curious and mysterious-looking symbols before it is first activated, or consecrated. However, once properly and personally consecrated, it will be transformed into a real and powerful talisman dedicated to helping you to achieve the success you desire. Just as with a brand a new car, which would first need fueling and then purposefuly driving in the right direction before it could actually deliver anyone to their destination, the Prana disc will need charging with both your own positive mental energy as well as the earth's natural forces, and then focusing on your personal goals before it can succeed in achieving them. Consecrating your Prana takes only a few, but priceless minutes. Anything can be achieved with enough self belief and determination, providing it is humanly possible. Prana is the truly magic catalyst that will assist you in achieving your most ambitious goals and desires. Once your Prana has been effectively consecrated, or 'tuned', in just the way a TV antenna collects and converts invisible signals and then broadcasts them as a clear picture, it will collect and magnify all the available natural, positive forces along with your own psychic energies, and then channel them straight towards your personal goals.

. . I think that Prana talisman is working as I have been creating and drawing nonstop and with new confidence. . .
unbelievable. . .
Ms DN, London

Hey… I just wanted to let you know that the talisman is amazing! Thank you! Since I had it, work has been coming in, I feel great and everything seems to be getting better!
Ms NJ, Leicester

For further information visit-

www.PranaTalisman.com

You will feel physically and mentally stronger and energised. Confidence will brim within you and you will feel a potent force rise inside, discovering new personal powers and becoming sharp and decisive. You will intuitively recognise opportunities as they appear when previously they went-by undetected; you will feel 'lucky'!

Instead of stuff just happening around you, you will be able to make things happen!

Each PRANA talisman comes with its own 12 page booklet of easy instuctions and is supplied in a purple satin pouch.

www.PranaTalisman.com

The PRANA Talisman

Turn your Dreams into Reality with the Power of Magic & your Mind

PRANA is a real and very powerful, authentic magical talisman of ancient origin, to help you achieve all your goals.

Supplied in its own individual pouch & complete with a simple 12 page booklet of instructions and background information.

PRANA Original - £9.99 each
PRANA Deluxe Crystalised Edition - £14.99 each
(Shipping per order: £2.50 UK Mainland; £3.50 Europe; £5.00 R.O.W.) For full details and secure online ordering visit our website.

www.PranaTalisman.com

PRANA - the Talisman of the Elements, the Breath of Life and the Four Archangels.

MATT PATTINSON

SCIENCE

THE VANISHING HITCHHIKER

DAVID HAMBLING sticks out his thumb and wonders whether a psychological phemonenon might provide the background for a now classic urban legend

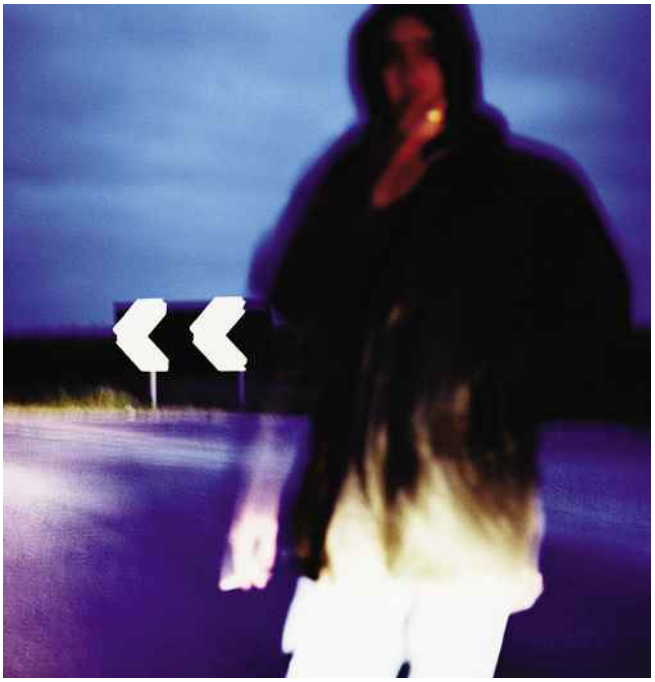
The vanishing hitchhiker is the archetypal FOAF (friend-of-a-friend urban legend), such a distinctive bit of folklore that Jan Brunvand used it as the title of his classic book in 1981, which kick-started the modern study of urban legends. You might assume that science could have nothing to do with a shaggy ghost story that is more about storytelling than fact. But the vanishing hitchhiker might have its roots in an established psychological phenomenon that causes strange things to happen when you drive in the dark.

Folklorists collected dozens of different versions of the tale as far back as 1942, but the basic version is simple enough. A driver picks up a hitchhiker on a lonely road; some time later in the journey the driver looks round and the hitchhiker has vanished from the moving car. There are many elaborations; in one variant the driver continues to the address requested by the hitchhiker, and is told the hitchhiker died years before. Other versions have the driver finding on a gravestone a coat or scarf borrowed by the hitchhiker. These plot devices hammer home the point that the vanishing hitchhiker was a ghost.

These stories almost invariably happen to drivers on long, dark roads at night when there are few other people about. It's the ideal setting for a ghost story, and also for a particular mental state.

'Inattentional amnesia' is a close relative of 'inattentional blindness'. The latter was famously demonstrated by an experiment in which subjects concentrating on counting passes in a basketball game consistently failed to spot a man in a gorilla suit walking through the game. Inattentional amnesia is more to do with the common experience of arriving at our destination without any memory of driving the last few miles.

You may not recall whether the light you went through a mile back was red or green; generally



NICK DALY / GETTY IMAGES

Folklorists found versions of the tale going as far back as 1942

speaking you did notice it at the time, but the event was not significant enough to be filed in your memory. A 2000 study by Jeremy Wolfe of Harvard Medical School determined that while some things are not seen, others are seen and immediately forgotten: instant amnesia.[1]

The non-technical term 'highway hypnosis' describes the mental twilight state caused by sensory deprivation while driving along a featureless road, especially at night. It encompasses both inattentional amnesia and inattentional blindness. The effects are aggravated by mobile phones; one experiment found that once a driver starts talking on their mobile, road signs disappear from their view.[2]

This amnesia may provide a simple explanation for the vanishing hitchhiker. You let someone in and drop them off 50 miles later – but retain no recollection of the drop-off. So naturally you're startled to find that they've disappeared.

"If it were inattentional blindness, then you would expect first person accounts – are there any?" asks Richard Wiseman, Professor of the Public Understanding of Psychology at the University of Hertfordshire and investigator of paranormal phenomena. "There are conspicuously few of them compared to other types of ghost sighting. Does that sink the theory?"

He has a point; as with many urban legends, but unlike ghost stories, it's very hard to find actual witnesses. Michael Goss attempted to track down cases in his 1984 book *The Evidence for Phantom Hitch-Hikers.* Interestingly, the only witness he manages to interview doesn't fit the stereotype. Roy Fulton describes picking up a vanishing hitchhiker in 1979. In his case there is no suggestion of a ghost, just someone who wasn't there after he was picked up.

The *Sunday Express's* coverage of the Fulton story suggested that it was a ghost. A local paper reported that a young Scotsman was said to have been run over while hitchhiking on the same road, but that there were no police reports to back this up. This shows how people like to attach an 'explanation', even a supernatural one, to an unexplained happening. And so a simple matter of inattentional amnesia gets inflated into a close encounter of the undead kind.

However, psychologists are not much interested in folklore, and vice versa. When I put the question of whether there might be a psychological explanation to Jan Brunvand, now retired but still active, his view was: "Your psychological suggestion makes sense, but I'm really only concerned with the distribution, history, and variation of the folkloric versions."

Other effects may be in play besides amnesia. A 2009 study at Kyushu University suggested that highway hypnosis was one of several phenomena that could produce ghost stories.[3] The researchers suggest that drivers can slip into a trance-like state without realising it, and that the phantom hitchhiker is a dream or hallucination. They mention one specific road, the Hirikata Bypass, where there have been several reports of phantom hitchhikers. These are variously described as being male or female, dressed in white, or with dishevelled hair. This suggests that it is the locale and not a local ghost that is responsible.

However, believers are not to be put off. One UK ghost writer has even suggested that highway hypnosis puts drivers into an altered state where they are able to perceive ghosts, much like the traditional medium's trance.[4] Science might be able to shed some light on the vanishing hitchhikers; but unless scientists and folklorists take an interest in each other's fields and start to work together, they will remain as elusive as ever.

NOTES

1 search.bwh.harvard.edu/pdf/fleeting_memories%20html.pdf
http://tinyurl.com/d93ta9q

2 www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12710835
http://tinyurl.com/cqocybd

3 psycnet.apa.org/journals/drm/19/4/232.pdf
http://tinyurl.com/cogovk4

4 www.ghosts.org.uk/ghost/3124/haunted/road/figure-on-horseback/lincolnshire.html
http://tinyurl.com/cwtgnvk

Join all these forums and more with one click!

Head on over to CULT-LABS.COM - where your taste in film is good!

THE KENTISH APEMAN

NEIL ARNOLD explains how the 'Bigfoot' of Tunbridge Wells made the news headlines

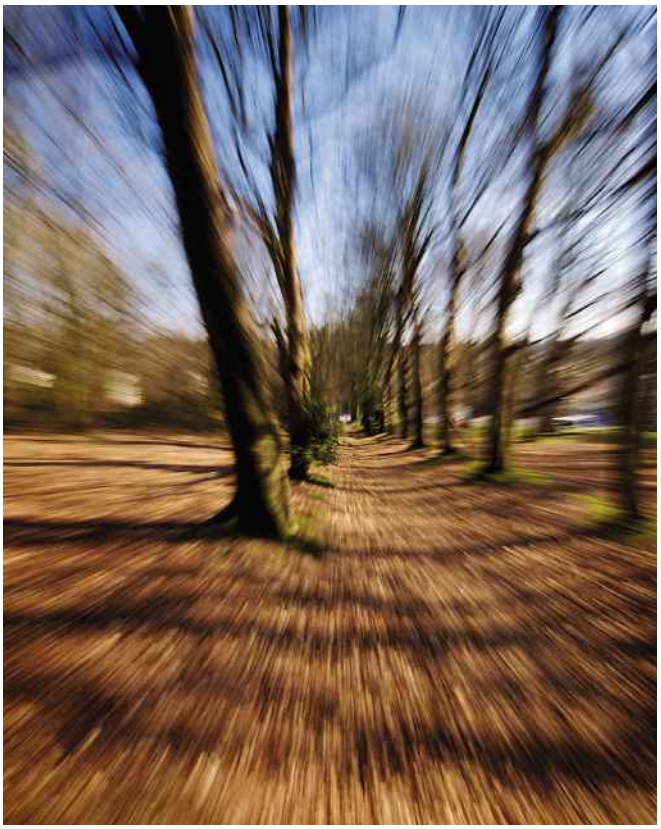
In late November of last year, stories appeared in the British press concerning sightings of a Bigfoot-type creature in the unlikeliest of locations: the genteel Kentish town of Royal Tunbridge Wells.

The story appeared on local news websites before being picked up by the nationals (both tabloids and broadsheets), and claimed that an 8-ft (2.4m)-tall hairy beast with long arms and demonic "burning red eyes" had been sighted on a number of occasions in recent months, with the most recent encounter having taken place in early November in the wooded area of Tunbridge Wells Common. No witnesses were named nor dates given, but it was said that this was not the first time the "Kentish Apeman" had been seen around Tunbridge Wells and that the hairy monster had first surfaced during WWII.

The Tunbridge Wells 'Bigfoot' story is a typical example of how so many alleged monster stories in the media come about. In this case, it seems to have been because I mentioned the subject in passing to a local Kentish newspaper.

In fact, the story first came to light on the Centre for Fortean Zoology website on 23 October 2012. The story had been sent to the CFZ's Jonathan Downes by Lloyd Pye. Pye had received an email from a man named 'Graham S', who wrote as follows:

"I'm a house painter working in and around Tunbridge Wells in Kent, south-east England. A few years ago I was painting the house of an elderly lady. During a tea break we touched on her army service and she told me that, during the Second World War she was on leave and was at home in Tunbridge Wells. One particular day she went to the common with her husband and was sitting on a bench when they became aware of a shuffling noise behind them. Upon turning around both her husband and herself saw what she described as 'a tall, hairy ape like creature with eyes that were 'burning' and had a reddish colour' and it was moving towards them at a slow pace. They observed this creature for some time until they became afraid and they both fled, terrified. She went on to say that they told the police and members of their family, thinking that a gorilla had escaped from a zoo but... were not believed."



JAMES GALPIN

DAVID ANSTISS / WIKIPEDIA COMMONS

"They became aware of a shuffling noise behind them"

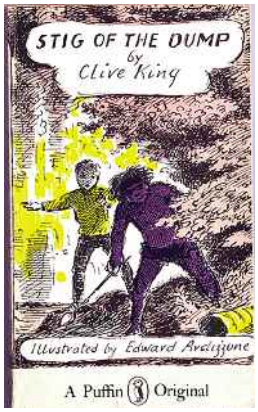
LEFT: Could Tunbridge Wells Common be home to a large, hairy monster?

This appeared to be an intriguing story, but having researched the town in some detail for my recent book *Haunted Tunbridge Wells*, I was aware that despite being heavily wooded in some parts, Tunbridge Wells Common is too frequently visited by members of the public to hide a large creature of any kind. I considered the usual theories to explain out-of-place animals – that a large animal might have escaped from a private menagerie, possibly as a result of wartime bombing, or that a gorilla or some other primate had escaped from a zoo or circus. I don't believe that either of these theories holds up, which leaves the possibility that the creature was the product of a hoaxer – although the idea that such a costume, especially one with "burning" red eyes, could have been purchased, or even created, in the context of wartime Britain also seems unlikely.

Odd though this case appears, it wasn't the only time that a large, hairy monster had been reported in Kent; my files suggest that such encounters, though rare, do take place, and that there is a remarkable similarity between many of them. For instance, at around the same time during WWII a creature known as the "Hairy Man of Wouldham" was reported from the woods around Blue Bell Hill, near Maidstone (also known for its road ghost cases; see **FT73:27-31**; **104:36-40**)

Stranger still, this creature – also said to resemble a hair-covered man standing some eight feet tall and with glowing red eyes – was seen as recently as 2012. I'd been conducting a night-time ghost walk in the area when a group of people screamed. Five men on the tour claimed that as their torch beams had flashed through the foliage they'd seen a hulking, hairy creature run through the woods some 60 yards (55m) away. I saw nothing.

In 1974, a woman named Maureen had a terrifying encounter a few miles from Blue Bell Hill in woods at Walderslade. She'd been with her boyfriend at the time, and as he was making a campfire she suddenly felt as though she was being watched. About 30 yards (27m) away was a massive, hair-covered creature, its eyed glowing in the darkness. Maureen stood transfixed as the manifestation disappeared behind some undergrowth. She never told her boyfriend, whom she eventually married, what she had seen that night.



Could it have been the same creature seen by a group of men in November 1991 and reported to me by Harry Payne, one of the witnesses? The four men, all members of the Territorial Army, were making their way to a country pub and were walking through woods at Burham, a village near Blue Bell Hill, when a large creature appeared up ahead. The men, thinking it was someone playing a prank, began throwing sticks and stones at the apparition before it moved out of sight. Only when they reached the spot where the creature had stood did they realise it must have been some eight feet tall.

A woman who preferred only to be called 'Charlotte' told me of her own mind-boggling encounter. At about 11pm on a November night in 2008 she was driving home to Dartford from the University of Kent when, as she approached a deserted slip road, a tall, spindly-limbed, hair-covered creature with a domed head crossed the road a few yards ahead. The manimal unnerved Charlotte so much that she almost crashed the car swerving to avoid it.

Just what are people seeing in the woods and commons of the Garden of England? While reports of Bigfoot and Yeti across the world have some credibility on the basis of vast potential habitats, for an unknown species of upright walking ape to be hiding in one of the most densely populated corners of the British Isles is nigh on impossible. Should we consider the idea – mooted in celebrated cases like Mothman or the Owlman of Cornwall – that such seemingly physical forms are some kind of manifestation triggered by certain susceptible witnesses? Or are people having encounters with the spirits of Neolithic hunters? This theory doesn't sound so absurd when we consider the encounter reported by a Maidstone woman called Corrine a decade or so ago. She was conducting a psychic investigation at Blue Bell Hill near the ancient Kits Coty House stones when she was confronted by the figure of a muscular man with long hair and wearing a fur loincloth.

Stories such as these may have provided author Clive King with the inspiration for his classic 1963 children's book *Stig of the Dump*. King went to school in Rochester, a few miles from Blue Bell Hill, and rumour has it that his book was based on local legends of a hair-covered man seen in the woods and quarries of the area. Interestingly, one section of the book mentions a set of ancient stones and even a sighting of a leopard – there have been numerous sightings of so-called 'big cats' around Blue Bell Hill over the years.

The Tunbridge Wells 'Bigfoot' made worldwide headlines and generated much Internet disinformation as the result of a rather surreal snowball effect. Most people scoffed at such an absurd report. But that will offer little comfort to anyone who, travelling through Kent on a dark night, encounters a hair-covered, outsize entity with glowing red eyes….

Mythconceptions

by Mat Coward

162. BUTCH BALDIES

The myth

Bald men have higher levels of testosterone than men with a full head of hair.

HUNT EMERSON

The "truth"

I put this belief in the same category as "Yellow teeth are stronger than white teeth" – it's a comfort myth, popular because it makes people feel better about an aspect of their appearance that doesn't conform to current beauty standards. And it suggests that the Universe observes the laws of swings-and-roundabouts justice: your shiny bonce may lessen your sexual attractiveness, but at the same time potential mates will be drawn by your heightened sexual potency, caused by all that testosterone and signalled by your baldness. But in fact, high levels of testosterone do not cause hair loss. Rather, men who have a genetic predisposition to male pattern baldness have hair follicles which are excessively sensitive to the sex hormone dihydrotestosterone (DHT). This causes the hair follicles to shrink, so that less hair grows and that which does is so short and fine as to be largely invisible. Tests show that on average bald and hairy men have similar levels of testosterone. It's speculated that the myth connecting baldness with potency may have arisen because castration in men halts the development of baldness, presumably by interfering with DHT production, and thus eunuchs tend to be hairy.

Sources

www.realage.com/mens-health-guide/testosterone-can-cause-hair-loss-and-baldness-in-men; http://news.consumerreports.org/health/2009/04/april-false-medical-myths-debunked.html; www.bernsteinmedical.com/hair-loss/faq-myths-more/hair-loss-myths; http://uk.askmen.com/sports/health_200/222b_mens_health.html

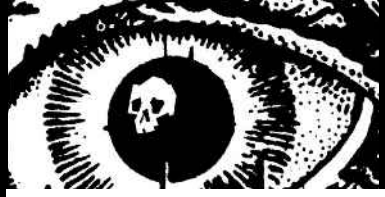
Disclaimer

Trichologists, stars of *EastEnders*, and spam-topped love machines alike, are welcome to use FT's letters page to correct this column's errors, misinterpretations, and hairy howlers.

Mythchaser

A reader tells me he is absolutely busting to know whether it's true that a) the comfortable capacity of a human bladder is roughly one pint; and b), if so, whether this is the origin of the pint as a popular unit for selling drinks.

FOR MORE MYTHCONCEPTIONS, GO TO:
www.forteantimes.com/strangedays/mythbusters



MATT PATTINSON

GHOSTWATCH

ALAN MURDIE concludes his alcoholic survey and finds that spirits seem to prefer beer

SOUTH WALES ARGUS

ABOVE: Staff at the Hanbury Arms, in Pontypool, South Wales, keep an eye out for the guzzling ghost who stole 88 pints of Strongbow cider.

SPOOKS AND ALE

Although whilst studying the literature of haunted pubs one can collect occasional reports such as that of Mrs Heron Maund, landlady of The Plough at Clifton, Oxfordshire, who saw the glass containing her nightcap of whisky mysteriously turned upside down in 1966 (see *The Haunted Inns of England*, 1972, by Jack Hallam) or, even more rarely, the disturbance of soft drinks such as the Pepsi Max moved in the cellar at the White Lion Pub in Cannock in 2007 (*Cannock Chase Post*, 29 Mar 2007), it soon becomes apparent that it is beer which has the greatest appeal for ghosts.

Thus, the story reported in September 2012 of a ghost splitting open a barrel of cider at the Hanbury Arms, Pontypool, Wales ("It wasn't funny when we lost 88 pints of Strongbow" said owner Sean O'Connor quoted in the *Daily Mirror,* 4 Sept 2012) is an exception. Ghosts in haunted hostelries prefer to make the pub's beer supply the focus of their manifestations, with the sheer quantity of reports showing that ghosts select beer ahead of any other form of alcoholic drink when making their presence felt.

A ghost called 'Charlie the Barman' reputedly filled a seven pint enamel jug with beer overnight at the Holman Clavel Inn at Culmhead, Somerset, according to the landlord Mr L Phillips (*Daily Herald*, 11 June 1953) with other antics performed by Charlie having subsequently entered into legend (see the *Folklore of Somerset*, 1976, by Kingsley Palmer).

THE LANDLADY WENT DOWNSTAIRS WITH A SHOTGUN AFTER BEING WOKEN BY NOISES

One night in February 1969 Mrs Madge Walker, the landlady of the Chequers Inn at Yeldon, Bedfordshire, went downstairs armed with a shotgun after being woken by noises. She found four freshly pulled pints on the counter of the empty bar. "I always turn off the taps in the cellar and leave the door locked," she said. "You can usually drain off about a pint when the taps are turned off but never four pints". Jokingly, she went on: "I don't mind losing four pints of beer really. Thank goodness it isn't whisky" (*Bedfordshire Times*, 28 Feb 1969).

Another anonymous ghost pulling pints for itself manifested at the Minorca Hotel, Wigan, Lancashire, during the 1970s but apparently never consumed them, according to its entry in the "haunted hostelries" chapter in Terence Whitaker's *Lancashire's Ghosts and Legends* (1980). Astonishing as these claims sound, the same phenomenon was reported at the notorious King's Cellars at Croydon in 1978 (see *The Haunted Pub Guide*, 1985, by Guy Playfair).

The mysterious disappearance of beer in glasses is a problem that seems to have been particularly acute in the north of England some 40 years ago. For example, a ghost was blamed for stealing beer at a social club at Greatham, Durham, as reported in the *Northern Echo* on 1 April 1968. The date might suggest a hoax, but regulars also reported footsteps and banging noises, ascribed to a Grey Lady in a village with a long tradition of ghost stories. Four years later it was the turn of St Benet's Monastery Social Club at Monkwearworth, where the disappearance of ale from glasses was attributed to a headless monk (*Sunday Sun*, 19 Nov 1972). In 1973 at the Marsden Grotto

in South Shields, the presence of a ghost which supposedly drank up beer left out in a special pewter tankard (since stolen) set out on Hallowe'en was revealed (*Sunday Post*, 14 Nov 1973). This seems to have been transmogrified into a later tradition averring that a tankard of Scotch ale was left out every night for the ghost to consume. According to the most detailed account of the story provided by Darren Ritson and Mike Hallowell in *Ghost Taverns* (2010), the tankard was sometimes found wholly or partially drained and experiments found that brown ale or "fine cask conditioned ale" was sometimes an acceptable substitute, and on one occasion cider – but on no account would the ghost accept lager. In June 1999 Mike Hallowell conducted a vigil at the pub with the tankard filled and placed out at 2am in the bar, then known as the Copenhagen Room. On checking the tankard at 5.20am, it was found to be empty with no obvious explanation.

In October 2009 a ghost was blamed for taking beer from barrels and topping up the pints of drinkers at Apsley House in Southsea, Hampshire. Landlady Janice McCormack claimed that a ghost was pouring extra beer into the pint glasses of her regular customers. Some locals blamed the spirit of actor Oliver Reed, who occasionally drank at the pub before his death in 1999 (*D.Mail*, 1 Oct 2009).

Nor is it only pubs where beer is targeted. In September 2003 a ghost was reported moving beer at the Co-op store in Penzance, with claims that one incident was captured on CCTV. Four cans were seen thrown into an aisle, with film of the event later broadcast on morning television. (*Western Morning News*, 19 Sept 2003).

Above all, interference with beer taps and flows, interrupting supplies to the living has become a standard trick attributed to pub ghosts. One of the earliest reports is from 1970 at the Volunteer Pub in Baker Street. This blamed a ghost for turning off the gas that powered the engine that pumped up beer (*Marylebone Mercury*, 15 May 1970). Many more widely separated examples have followed. In 1987 the Rising Sun Hotel in Monmouth reported a spook that moved glasses and turned off beer taps on real ale barrels (*South Wales Argus*, 24 April 1987). Similarly, gas cylinders were turned off and glasses displaced at Nicky Tams Bar and Bothy, a free house in Stirling in 1999 (see *Haunted Places of Scotland*, 1999, by Martin Coventry). In 2007 the discovery of a gravestone dating from 1667 at the Ring O' Bells pub in Halifax was believed to have caused a resurgence of ghostly manifestations at the pub, including the switching off of beer taps in the cellar and the turning off water taps at night (*Halifax Evening Courier*, 26 Mar 2007).

Two years later, at Exeter, the Prospect Inn suffered ghostly disturbances with Mark Cameron, the tenant for the previous eight years, stating: "On numerous occasions the last person to lock up the cellar and then open it in the morning – including myself – has noticed the gas cylinders, connected to the beer lines, turned off, when they were on the evening before... Several people over the years have also reported an empty beer barrel moving from one end of the cellar to the other, overnight as well."

However, the Prospect's ghost appears in a form too young to be a drinker, being "a seven- or eight-year-old girl with long blonde hair on Christmas Eve," walking along a hallway in the upstairs living quarters "wearing a long, flowing, cream-coloured night dress carrying a rag doll behind her"(*Exeter Express and Echo*, 23 Dec 2009). In the spring of 2010 gas taps for the beer supplies were being mysteriously turned off in the cellar at the Rose and Crown, Bulford, Wiltshire, amid other poltergeist phenomena that landlord John Sutton attributed to the presence of at least "five or six ghosts" on the premises (*Salisbury Journal*, 18 May 2010).

And so the reports go on, widely separated in both time and location and without any explanation being proposed.

One of the very few writers to give the topic of beer-related manifestations more than cursory notice has been John Rackham, author of the excellent *Brighton Ghosts, Hove Hauntings* (2001). Rackham found the most dramatic of beer-focused phenomena occurred at the Stag Inn, Brighton, where successive licensees experienced weird incidents including a barrel of beer being thrown down the cellar steps and the contents of another barrel vanishing. In the course of researching two chapters on haunted pubs, Rackham found that the interference with beer gas cylinders was the most frequently reported phenomenon in pubs in the Brighton district. He observed:

"While cask conditioned beer (real ale) is drawn up from public house cellars by hand pumps, keg beers (sparkling bitters, lager and some stouts, plus most ciders), reach the bar through being propelled along the beer lines (tubing) by a mixture of (in most instances) oxygen and carbon gases released

ANDREW CURTIS / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

ABOVE: The unusual Marsden Grotto in South Shields has been plagued by a spirit that would seemingly sup anything except lager.

ABOVE AND BELOW: Ghost-related beers such as 'Ghost Ship' and 'Ghost Ale' are all the rage.

from gas cylinders. If these cylinders are turned off – it takes three or four full turns of a cylinder's rotational valve to do this – the service to customers is immediately halted. For some unaccountable reason these gas cylinders appear to have a fascination for whatever paranormal forces tend to be at work in haunted hostelries... I checked if there might be a mechanical reason for the cylinder failures (this problem is very rare in non-haunted pubs with gas cylinders). The technical manager of a leading supplier of gas cylinders to the licensed trade told me that he already knew of the problem and had himself been called out on two occasions to allegedly haunted premises – a pub and night club – where he failed to find any technical reason for the malfunctions."

However, knowledge of the pumping mechanism for beer led Rackham to question the claim by a medium that the ghost at The Stag was that of a landlord who choked himself to death after becoming caught in the beer lines in the darkened cellar. As Rackham commented, not only did it seem unlikely that an adult would die in such a fashion – surely worthy of entry in the 'Strange Deaths' column – but this type of beer pump, although invented in the 19th century, was not in general use until much later, so there would have been no lines to become entangled in.

The results of this limited but interesting enquiry by John Rackham suggest that there is no obvious mechanical explanation readily identified for this puzzling and persistent phenomenon which can clearly cause great inconvenience in busy pubs. Of course, pranks or deliberate sabotage might be suspected, but why have we no accounts of guilty culprits being caught and brought to book, unless the licensed trade is suppressing the details of the malicious hoaxers and their detection?

The persistent interference with beer taps on gas cylinders in haunted pubs may be an expression of the poltergeist obsession with turning switches of other kinds on or off – lights, TVs and cookers consistently feature in poltergeist reports spread over many years.

Supposing a link to exist between ghostly manifestations and beer, and following Rackham's observations, plenty of possibilities for future research become apparent (much of which could be conducted in pubs!) There is also an extensive literature on pub ghosts in the UK that can be drawn upon.

However, although ghosts and poltergeists have been reported for centuries, the pub or inn as the scene of a haunting is a comparative late comer, with few examples reported prior to World War I. As historian Owen Davies remarks in *The Haunted: A Social History of Ghosts* (2007), "there are relatively few instances prior to the twentieth century".

The idea of their being a romance in old inns which required their being populated with phantoms seems to have begun in the early 20th century, following the books of HV Morton and the enthusiasm of GK Chesterton and other writers for drink and a traditional English scene they saw as fading. But by 1964, *Weekend Magazine* was informing readers that the most likely place to meet a ghost was "in your local" (*Weekend Magazine*, Oct 1964). To folklorists and legend gatherers, ghost stories have supplanted older tales of murderous innkeepers dispatching guests or of collaboration with smugglers, and over the last 30 years, the drinks industry itself has embraced spectral culture with competitions for Britain's most haunted pubs. Long gone are the days when a pub manager might be sacked for talking about a haunting to the media, as happened at the Plough Inn at Clapham, south London, in 1970.

Now we even have a number of ghost-related beers. 'Centurion's Ghost' produced by York Brewery was predictable, but Adnams brewery has also come up with 'Ghost Ship'. Indeed, if all else fails in having a ghostly experience in a pub, one might finally resort to staring into one's beer, at least judging by the extraordinary claim in a letter published in *The Star* newspaper on 13 December 1951 under the heading "Saw Gibbet In Pint of Beer". A Mr OJ Stanley of the Brook, Chatham, stated that on two occasions when serving at "a waterside inn" (location not given) he had seen the shape of a gibbet with a body hanging from it appear in the froth on pints of beer. The first occurred when serving a pint for a "big man"; the second when serving the same "big man" and two friends months later. This time the same gibbet pattern appeared on all three pints, which he drew to the attention of the trio. Eight months later the "big man" was hanged for murder at Norwich prison and nine years later the other two men quarrelled. "One killed the other and was also hanged at Norwich."

But maybe this story of a vision in beer – assuming it to be true – is not quite so extraordinary. It harks back to the cup and mirror divination traditions of antiquity, as practised by the ancient Greeks, the Assyrians and Etruscans and the Persian Magi. It also seems likely the Cup of Joseph in the Old Testament, "in which my Lord drinketh and whereby he divineth," (Genesis 44:5-15) is a reference to a vessel used for visionary purposes, and cups with special properties also featured in ancient Egyptian ritual and culture.

So when it comes to ghosts and alcohol, it seems you don't have to be in your cups to encounter strange things, either in your pint or going on around it!

The thrill of the ride
Cyclist
Short and Steep
Cyclist takes on Europe's toughest gradients
ON SALE NOW!
Rethink your winter training
Team Sky's new kit revealed
The future of brake systems is here
Marianne Vos
Best cyclist in the world?
ISSUE 5 MAR 2013 £5
9 772050 653000 03

For the ROAD

THE MAGAZINE FOR PASSIONATE ROAD CYCLISTS

Sainsbury's WHSmith TESCO And all good independent Newsagents

Available to order in WHSmith High Street

MATT PATTINSON

ARCHÆOLOGY

Our archæological round-up is brought to you by **PAUL DEVEREUX**, a founding co-editor of *Time and Mind: The Journal of Archaeology, Consciousness and Culture* (www.bergjournals.com/timeandmind).

COPYRIGHT: CLIVE RUGGLES, WWW.CLIVERUGGLES.NET

LEFT: This ground shot is taken along the innermost pathway of the labyrinth, directly towards the central mound. This line widens out towards its terminus, creating a 'false perspective' that makes it appear parallel as it stretches away into the distance.

WALKING NAZCA'S LABYRINTH

Some fresh research has been published (*Antiquity*, vol.86, no.334) concerning the enigmatic "Nazca lines", those ancient, precise linear and geometrical desert markings in Peru infamously and erroneously explained as being alien spacecraft landing strips by Erich Von Daniken decades ago. Archæoastronomer Clive Ruggles of Leicester University and Nicholas Saunders of the University of Bristol have undertaken an eminently wise bit of research – they have walked some 1500km (933 miles) of the mysterious markings. Although the lines and patterns are most visible by means of air and satellite observation, their intimate details can only be discerned at ground level. The two researchers particularly focused on places where the lines crossed one another, to see what the layering was like, to gain an idea of which came first and to examine any pottery or other archæological material at such points. They have produced the most detailed study of the features to date.

Of particular interest is Ruggles's discovery of a "labyrinth" configuration of markings – a unicursal geometric pattern. (He discovered it 20 years ago, in fact, but was only able to return and study it during this piece of fieldwork.) It is well hidden in the flat and featureless pampa landscape. When the lines of the obscure configuration are walked, "only the path stretching ahead of you is visible at any given point," Ruggles informs us. It is a strangely disorienting activity. He states that the labyrinth's 4.5km (2.8 miles) of lines/paths were "clearly made for walking". The pristine condition and well-preserved edges of the labyrinth indicate that it was only ever walked by a few people in single file.

It is surprising that university researchers of the Nazca lines never seem to make the cross-cultural association this columnist has been banging on about in books and articles for many years, namely, the fact that the Kogi Indians of northern Colombia walk the prehistoric Taironas paths in their territory as a religious act, much as a Catholic might tell rosary beads. The Kogi shamanic elite, the mamas, say these paths are partial physical traces of spirit paths in Aluna, the spiritualised landscape only they can see. The Kogi live at the northernmost tip of what is effectively the Andean mountain range, so this is not a huge cross-cultural leap to make. Regarding the Nazca lines in general, Saunders comments that "the arrow-straight lines and geometric shapes" seem likely "to have had a spiritual and ritual purpose". Well, quite so. *University of Leicester Press Office, 10 Dec 2012.*

COPYRIGHT: CLIVE RUGGLES, WWW.CLIVERUGGLES.NET

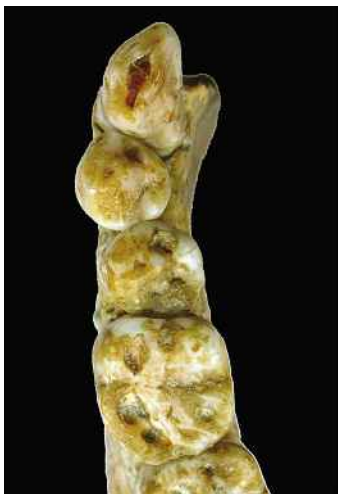
ABOVE: This aerial view shows the southern part of the labyrinth, including the central mound and the spiral that marks the 'outer' end.

TOUCH WOOD

Study of four Neolithic timbered wells in Germany has revealed that carpentry skills existed in Europe at a much earlier time than had been supposed. The well architecture was constructed from oak timbers, which were preserved in a waterlogged environment allowing precise dendroarchæological (tree-ring) dates to be determined. These rare survivals show that refined carpentry was practised between 5,469 and 5,098 BC. And who knows how long before that – the origin of human skills, dentistry, carpentry or others, always seems to get pushed back further in time as research proceeds. Perhaps we are cleverer than we give ourselves credit for! *PLoS ONE, 19 Dec 2012.*

OPEN WIDE

Dentistry as we know it is a very recent development, and this writer has often winced at the thought of the agony prehistoric people must have endured with toothache, as sometimes is underlined by scars caused by untreated abscesses found in Stone Age skulls. But this was not necessarily always the case. In Pakistan, for instance, archæologists found drill holes in decaying teeth in skulls up to 9,000 years old made, probably, using fine flint drills, and researchers in Slovenia using new X-ray imaging techniques have now found a beeswax cap applied to a broken canine tooth in a jawbone about 6,500 years old that belonged to a man aged 24 to 30. The cap perfectly filled a large cavity in the tooth and sealed the upper part of a vertical crack in the enamel and dentin layers. Material in beeswax contains anti-inflammatory properties, so was a suitable material to use. The origins of dentistry are clearly very ancient indeed, at least in some parts of the world. *New Scientist, 19 Sept; Int. Herald Tribune, 26 Sept 2012.*



CLASSICAL CORNER

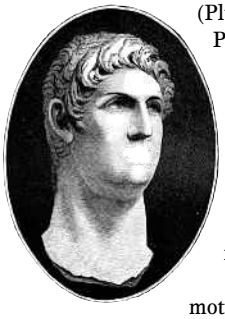
FORTEANA FROM THE ANCIENT WORLD COMPILED BY BARRY BALDWIN

160. KATE-OSTROPHE IN THE MAKING?

Some cautionary classical tales for royal baby-watchers.

Just as well for Kate that she has proved fertile. And she'd better stay the nine-month course – unless she wants to end up like Nero's wife Octavia who, having been divorced for barrenness, was then accused of aborting a secret lover's child, and with veins slashed open was forcibly asphyxiated in a steam-room (Tacitus, *Annals*, bk14 ch63), having survived (Suetonius, *Nero*, ch35) several marital attempts at strangulation.

Nero then married her rival, amber-haired Poppæa, who was soon impregnated with imperial seed. A baby girl issued, immediately (as was Mum) given the royal title Augusta. Three months later, wonder-child expired. At once promoted to divine status, with temple and cult, Nero being (Tacitus, *Annals*, bk15 ch23) "as immoderate in his grief as in his joy".



Some years later, the again-gravid Poppæa was kicked in her 'bump' by hubby after nagging him for being late home from the races – Nero, of course, had long since gone to the dogs – and expired. Remorseful emperor had the late mum mummified Egyptian style and sent off in a no-expense-spared state funeral (Tacitus, *Annals*, bk16 ch6).

As well as knocking off his mother, half-brother, and an aunt, Nero also had inconvenient stepson Rufius Crispinus drowned by his slaves while fishing (Suetonius, *loc. cit.*) – not the one that got away.

At his death (AD 211), Septimus Severus left his throne to sons Caracalla and Geta. Former soon had latter slaughtered in their mother's arms, remarking in paronomasian Latin "Sit divus, dum non sit vivus" = "Let him be a god/As long as he lies under the sod." (*Augustan History*, Geta, ch2 para9; Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, bk78 ch2 para3).

Things did not improve with Christianity. At Constantine's death (AD 337), to clear the way for his three sons' succession, there was (diverse sources) what Gibbon (ch18) dubs "a promiscuous massacre" of other putatively claimant relatives (two collateral brothers and seven cousins) and suspect courtiers. Only nephews Gallus (12) and Julian (6) were spared, Gallus subsequently liquidated, clearing the way for Julian to become Rome's last pagan emperor in 361.

The nadir was reached in 797 when regent Irene (Peace) blinded her son, Constantine VI, in order to usurp his throne, becoming Byzantium's first (but not last) female ruler (again, plenitude of sources) herself deposed (802), lucky to get off with exile to Lesbos, thereby – geographically – becoming the empire's first royal Lesbian.

Royal Flush belongs to the dynastic lines from Alexander's mother via the Ptolemies down to last of the line Cleopatra VII (Greek for Elizabeth Taylor). Olympias (born Myrtale) was a princess from Epirus (modern Albania). Apart from suspected involvement in the deaths of husband Philip II and perhaps Alexander, her undoubted achievements include drugging Arrihidæus (Philip's son by another of his five wives) into insanity and (her pièce de résistance), roasting alive two suspect royal babies (boy and girl) along with their mother (Plutarch, *Alexander*, ch16 para3; Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, bk8 ch7 para5) – ultimate kebabbing.

Ptolemaic register (from numerous sources; don't forget BBC's 1983 'The Cleopatras'; best modern account is Peter Green's *Alexander to Actium*, 1990):

P IV: Began his reign with matricide.

P V: Secured power by murdering mother Arsinoe.

P VII (nicknamed 'Physkon' = 'The Fat'): assassinated the son of new wife Cleopatra II during their wedding feast; later killed Cleopatra's son and sent the dismembered pieces to her – were they re-gifted? For good measure, he seduced their daughter (Cleopatra III) and married her, without divorcing the incumbent Cleo. Their son, Alexander, equally adipose, murdered his mother to avoid power-sharing.

P XI: After 19 days of doubtful connubial bliss, murdered wife (also – depending on which source – mother/stepmother/half sister) Berenice, being promptly lynched by an Alexandrian mob.

P XII (father of THE Cleopatra): Upon return from deposition, murdered daughter Berenice who'd been keeping the throne warm for him.

Cleopatra VII: may have arranged brother-husband P XIII's drowning in the Nile; certainly poisoned his successor P XIV; persuaded Marc Antony to liquidate sister Arsinoe.

All this makes our own E II's Brown Windsor Soup of brats' divorces, associated scandals, and her "annus horribilis" seems tame – runs a good second to any episode of *Midsomer Murders.*

NECROLOG

This month, we say goodbye to a hardline 'skeptic' and co-founder of CSICOP, a pioneer of the green movement, a transvestite astrologer nun and a titled Tory dowser

PAUL KURTZ

Kurtz came from a Jewish family of "intellectual freethinkers". In World War II he fought at the Battle of the Bulge and entered the concentration camps of Buchenwald and Dachau shortly after their liberation. After the war he took a doctorate in Philosophy at Columbia University, then taught the subject at several universities before moving in 1965 to the State University of New York at Buffalo, where he became Professor of Philosophy, remaining until his retirement in 1991. He devoted his life to opposing religious dogma and those he regarded as purveyors of mystical claptrap (fire-walking, homeopathy, voodoo, faith healing, dowsing, reincarnation, channelling, ufology, you name it), while promoting "eupraxsophy" – a word based on the Greek for "good", "practice", and "wisdom". He saw this as a science-based alternative that would provide ethical and social structure without the need for God, avoiding what he called the "transcendental temptation". (His 1986 book, *The Transcendental Temptation*, is considered among his most influential writings.) In 1973 he drafted what became known as Humanist Manifesto II, which was signed by 120 intellectuals including Andrei Sakharov, Sidney Hook, Francis Crick, Sir Julian Huxley, AJ Ayer and Isaac Asimov. Its best-known dictum was: "No deity will save us; we must save ourselves".

In 1969 Kurtz founded Prometheus Books to publish works critical of religion and New Age flimflam. It now has a backlist of more than 2,500 titles. In 1975 he wrote a manifesto, "Objections to Astrology", which was endorsed by 186 scientists and published in *The Humanist*, the newsletter of the AHA (American Humanist Association), which Kurtz edited from 1967 to 1978. (The astronomer Carl Sagan, incidentally, thought the manifesto too authoritarian and refused to sign.)

In the early Seventies, the sociologist Marcello Truzzi (1935-2003) published a newsletter, *The Zetetic*, which examined astrology, ufology, parapsychology and other "proto-sciences", as he liked to call them. With Martin Gardner, James Randi and Ray Hayman, he founded RSEP (Resources for the Scientific Evaluation of the Paranormal). Kurtz was impressed by *The Zetetic*, and in April 1976, at a specially convened AHA conference, he invited Truzzi to help found what became CSICOP (the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal). Other founder members included Carl Sagan, Isaac Asimov, BF Skinner and Philip J Klass. In 2006 CSICOP was renamed CSI (the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry) to be more "media friendly".

Kurtz laid out the aims of CSICOP as: "(1) to criticize claims of the paranormal and pseudoscience; (2) to replicate the methods of scientific inquiry and the nature of the scientific outlook; (3) to seek a balanced view of science in the mass media; (4) to teach critical thinking in the schools."

Truzzi edited CSICOP's journal, initially also called *The Zetetic*. He thought CSICOP should engage in a dispassionate investigation of paranormal claims based on actual evidence, as its name suggested; but it soon became clear that Kurtz and other hard-liners saw themselves as crusaders against the paranormal with CSICOP as a pressure group to stem the rising tide of irrationality. All paranormal experiences and psychic talents, in their eyes, were the result of fraud, misperception, or faulty logic; their tone was more ideological than scientific, coloured by fundamentalist-materialist reductionism. Truzzi, on the other hand, felt he was a true sceptic who doubts, rather than a 'scoffer' who denies. He resigned from CSICOP in 1978 (see "A pioneering anomalist" by Paul Sieveking, **FT208:58-59**). The Committee's journal then became the more "hard-hitting" (i.e. debunking) *Skeptical Inquirer*, edited by Kendrick Frasier.

Also in 1978, Kurtz parted company with the AHA amid some acrimony, and went on to found the Council for Secular Humanism (1980) and the Center for Inquiry (1991). In 1980, in response to the rise of the religious Right, he founded the journal *Free Inquiry*. In its first issue he warned that "the reappearance of dogmatic authoritarian religions" had become a threat to intellectual freedom, human rights and scientific progress. In 2010, he founded the Institute for Science and Human Values and launched the journal *The Human Prospect*. During his working life he published over 800 articles or reviews, and wrote and edited more than 50 books, many of which have been translated into over 60 languages.

Paul Winter Kurtz, secular humanist and 'skeptic', born Newark, New Jersey 21 Dec 1925; died Amhurst, New York 20 Oct 2012, aged 86.

BARRY COMMONER

Though not the first to warn that the Earth was living beyond its means, Commoner (below) was one of the most energetic in trying to get the message across to the American public. He had a PhD in Cellular Biology from Harvard, and built a reputation as an expert on viruses, cell metabolism and the effects of radiation on living tissue. Over 20 years he helped to lay the foundation for the 'green' movement in a series of books that linked ecological concerns with a radical social agenda, appealing to traditional nature conservationists, the anti-nuclear movement and civil rights activists.

In his bestseller *The Closing Circle* (1971) he identified four simple 'laws' of ecology – "Everything is connected to everything else" (reminiscent of Fort's notion of Continuity); "Everything must go somewhere"; "Nature knows best"; and "There is no such thing as a free lunch" – and argued that the US should restructure its economy to conform to these rules. In 1980, he launched a spirited bid for the presidency, in retrospect making a lot more sense than either Jimmy Carter or Ronald Reagan. However, his platform, which included radical feminism and the cancellation of all Third World debt, was not one destined to appeal to the American public at the time, and he secured only 233,052 votes. He found a certain grim satisfaction in a question posed by a journalist as he stumped the campaign trail: "Dr Commoner, are you a serious candidate, or are you just running on the issues?"

Barry Commoner, biologist and environmentalist, born Brooklyn 28 May 1917; died 30 Sept 2012, aged 95.

JACK FERTIG

After dropping out of the University of California at Berkeley, Fertig earned a living as an astrologer. He became famous as Sister

Boom Boom, the most outrageous member of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence (other members included Sister Reyna Terror and Sister Dawnna Creation). Founded in 1979, the group was an 'order' of transvestite 'nuns' in miniskirt habits, wimples and fishnet tights, who specialised in giving impromptu performances lampooning religious leaders from the Pope to the televangelist Jerry Falwell. It was 1980 when Fertig first put on a nun's habit, gigantic foam rubber breasts, false eyelashes and stiletto heels, and introduced himself to the crowds of San Francisco's Castro district as "Sister Rose of the Bloody Stains of the Sacred Robes of Jesus but-you-can-call-me-Boom-Boom."

In 1982 he stood as a candidate for the city's Board of Supervisors, listing his occupation as "nun of the above". He won 23,124 votes, finishing in eighth place. When he tried to run for mayor against Diane Feinstein, the authorities introduced a new rule, known as the Sister Boom Boom Law, that candidates must use their legal names on the ballot. By 1984, he recalled, "I was tired of being the whipping boy for San Francisco being a weird town. The party got stale." He continued to work as an astrologer, volunteered as a tutor of immigrant children and helped to minister to people with Aids. In 1993 he became a Catholic, but by the time of his death had embraced Islam.

Jack Fertig, transvestite nun, born Chicago 21 Feb 1955; died from cancer 5 Aug 2012, aged 57.

SIR GEOFROY TORY

This classic, moustachioed British diplomat liked to quip that he was "Tory by name and Tory by nature". He was the first UK High Commissioner of Malaya (1957-63); Ambassador to Ireland (1964-66); and High Commissioner of Malta (1967-70). He retired to west Cork in Ireland, having purchased Rathclaren House overlooking the sea in Kilbrittain. A dowser, he occasionally helped gardaí in the search for bodies. Into his late 90s, he used a pendulum to diagnose food allergies for some 400 local "patients". He painted portraits and landscapes, made his own telescope, grafted apples, kept bees and made wine.

Sir Geofroy (William) Tory, KCMG (CMG), career diplomat and dowser, born 31 July 1912; died 18 July 2012, aged 99.

STRANGE DEATHS

UNUSUAL WAYS OF SHUFFLING OFF THIS MORTAL COIL

A birth went gruesomely wrong when doctors pulled the head off a baby as they struggled to deliver him. It happened after the baby's shoulders became stuck. At least six doctors had tried for six hours to deliver the child naturally at the hospital in Aracaju, Brazil. The mother, Maria Viera Alcilne Amoin, 22, said she knew something was wrong when she heard a crack and a medic shout: "Marcos, are you crazy?" Ms Amoin, who already has three children, said: "I felt some thing coming out, but it was too small. Then I realised it was just the head." She was rushed to theatre to have the headless body removed by cæsarean. Her family planned to sue, saying the 12lb (5.4kg) baby was too big for a natural birth. The hospital was investigating. *D.Mirror, 19 May 2012.*

A man in western India, his shirt soaked in blood, paraded his daughter's severed head through his village after killing her on 18 June because he was upset with her way of life and "indecent behaviour". Oghad (or Ogad) Singh, 46, a marble miner, beheaded Manju Kunwar, 20, with a single stroke of his ceremonial sword before a relative told him to hand himself in. He did so, still brandishing the head and sword. Manju had been living with her parents in the Rajasthani village of Dungarji after her arranged marriage broke down two years ago. Singh was enraged because she had had a series of affairs and had eloped with a man two weeks earlier. He forced her to return home and killed her. He was unrepentant and said she had brought dishonour on the family and made it hard to find husbands for her two unmarried sisters. *Metro, 19+21 June; [AP] 20 June 2012.*

A pregnant rape victim shot and decapitated her attacker. Nevin Yildirim, 26, was charged with the murder of Nurettin Gider, who she said had raped her repeatedly at gunpoint over several months at her home in Yalvac, southwest Turkey. The mother of two was five months pregnant and said the rapist was the father. He had blackmailed her, saying he would send nude photographs to her parents if she didn't sleep with him. It is believed she shot him 10 times, including several times in the groin. She then cut off his head before carrying it, dripping blood, to the village square and dumping it in front of shocked onlookers. "Don't play with my honour," she said. "Here is the head of the man who played with my honour." She demanded an abortion, though she was far beyond the 10-week limit allowed in Turkey. Women's groups in Turkey hailed her as a heroine. *D.Mail, 4 Sept; Irish Independent, 8 Sept 2012.*

An angler choked to death on a small sole he had caught while fishing with friends on a beach in Icapui, in Brazil's north-eastern state of Ceara, on 18 November. He had made a daft bet with his friends that he would be able to hold the fish between his teeth for a minute, but it dived down his throat and became lodged in his windpipe. Despite driving to a hospital two miles (3km) away, the angler collapsed and died. *D.Telegraph, D.Mirror, 23 Nov 2012.*

Two 13-year-old girls murdered a school-friend and ripped out her heart as a trophy in the Brazilian city of Sao Joaquim de Bicas (217 miles/350km north of Rio de Janeiro) on 26 May 2012. They stabbed Fabiola Santos Correa, 12, and hit her over the head with iron bars before stuffing her body parts, including her heart and a finger, into a bag. They told police they killed her because she had fallen in love with a member of a rival drugs gang and they were worried she would reveal secrets. They only meant to frighten her but killed her when she fought back. It was thought they had intended to show the body parts to their mothers and claim they were from a drugs trafficker who was threatening them – although another hypothesis was that drug bosses had ordered them to kill Fabiola and produce proof of their crime. An eight-year-old sister of one of the teenagers buried Fabiola's heart, thinking it belonged to a dead animal. *Irish Examiner, 22 June 2012.*

FT is reminded of the case of Californian cage fighter Jarrod Wyatt who in 2010 ripped the heart out of his training partner Taylor Powell while he was still alive. He also cut out his tongue and tore off most of his face. He said he had ingested hallucinogenic mushrooms and became convinced Powell was possessed by the Devil [FT268:27]. In September, he was jailed for 50 years. *[AP] 11 Sept 2012.*

THE FORTEAN TIMES BOOK OF STRANGE DEATHS VOL 2

ON SALE NOW FROM
WH SMITH AND AMAZON.CO.UK
TO ORDER DIRECT CALL 0844 844 0053

the UFO files

FORTEAN TIMES presents our monthly section featuring regular sighting reports, reviews of classic cases, entries on major ufological topics and hands-on advice for UFO investigators. **The UFO Files** will benefit from your input, so don't hesitate to submit your suggestions and questions.

To contact **The UFO Files**, email: **nufon@btinternet.com**

FLYINGSAUCERY

ANDY ROBERTS & DR DAVID CLARKE PRESENT THEIR REGULAR SURVEY OF THE LATEST FADS AND FLAPS FROM THE WORLD OF UFOLOGY

KEYSTONE / GETTY IMAGES

SIR PATRICK'S SAUCER

Obituaries of the veteran TV astronomer Sir Patrick Moore, who died aged 89 on 9 December, failed to mention his role in perpetrating one of the longest running pranks in UFO history (see **FT172:22**). Despite being a self-confessed UFO debunker – in 1995 he became Shadow Minister for UFOs and Outer Space for the Monster Raving Loony Party – he credited his TV debut to flying saucers. Sir Patrick enjoyed a long and largely undocumented role as ufological joker and was widely suspected of being responsible for a spoof contactee book, *Flying Saucer from Mars*, published in 1954. Its 'author', Cedric Allingham, disappeared and was reported to have died in Switzerland, but suspiciously Sir Patrick claimed to be one of the few people to have met him. The book mirrored George Adamski's story of contact with benevolent 'space brothers' that became a bestseller at a time when the amateur astronomer remained a struggling freelance writer.

As Chris Allan and Steuart Campbell revealed in an exclusive article for *Magonia* magazine in 1986, Moore created Allingham with help from a journalist friend. His helper was photographed, posing as Allingham, next to the astronomer's 10-inch reflecting telescope for the frontispiece of the book. When Dave Clarke interviewed Sir Patrick at his Sussex home in 2006, his irascible sense of humour remained intact but still he refused to sign our copy of *Flying Saucer from Mars* and claimed he had never heard of Cedric Allingham or the book. Ten years ago in these pages we urged Sir Patrick to 'fess up but, despite the evidence, it seems he went to his grave leaving one entry missing from his personal bibliography.

SOUTH AMERICAN FLAP ON ICE

Veteran ufologist Vicente-Juan Ballester Olmos has published the results of six years work by a team of researchers from Spain and Argentina into a flap of UFO sightings reported in Antarctica during the summer of 1965. Sensational press coverage told of "multiple scientific witnesses and simultaneous instrumental and photographic confirmation" by Argentine, Chilean and British personnel. At the time, the director of the British Antarctic Survey, Sir Vivian Fuchs, advised the British MoD that his people "did not consider the event important enough to make comment". But an international media frenzy began when an official communiqué was issued by the Argentinian navy, triggering a UFO wave across South America. This 'official confirmation' was enough for author Tim Good to include the story in his *Above Top Secret* (1987), further cementing the flap in the UFO mythology. But the Spanish team's forensic analysis tells a very different story. Most of the sightings were brief observations of unremarkable 'lights in the sky' and they found nothing to support claims of unusual magnetic disturbances or photographic evidence. Three key events on 3 July 1965, reported by personnel on the Laurie and Deception Islands, were most likely caused by a meteor, the Echo II satellite and a bright planet or star. The team found the base personnel swapped UFO stories by radio, triggering fresh reports. As in many other classic cases involving 'credible witnesses', the story does not stand up to critical scrutiny. The 183-page report can be downloaded as a free PDF here: www.ceticismoaberto.com/research/fotocat/avistamientos_ovni_antartida_1965.pdf

ALIEN FOOTY FANS?

The 1950s were halcyon days for UFO sightings. Recently, BBC World Service Sport interviewed witnesses to what is possibly ufology's most witnessed sighting. The event took place on 27 October 1954 at an Italian football match between the reserve teams of Fiorentina and rivals Pistoiese. The game was progressing without incident when suddenly it came to a halt, players and spectators alike looking to the skies in astonishment. "I remember everything," recalls Fiorentina player Ardico Magnini. "While we were playing the match everything came to a stop because everybody was looking up at the sky intensely." Spectator Gigi Boni remembers "seeing this incredible sight. They were moving very fast and then they just stopped. It all lasted a couple of minutes. I would like to describe them as being like Cuban cigars." Boni believes the cigar-shaped UFOs were extraterrestrial. "That's what I believe, and there's no other explanation I can give myself."

But not everyone had the same experience. Pistoiese player Romolo Tuci saw "something that looked like an egg that was moving slowly, slowly, slowly. Everyone was looking up and also there was some glitter coming down from the sky, silver glitter. We were astonished we had never seen anything like it before."

Meteorological balloons or alien craft? We'll never know for sure, but all the witnesses were proud that they had seen these defining icons of the 1950s. Tuci again: "I was so curious and I was also so, so happy because in those years everybody was talking about aliens, everybody was talking UFOs and we had the experience – we saw them directly, for real." www.bbc.co.uk/sport/0/football/20917594.

JENNY RANDLES LOOKS BACK AT SOME OF THE MOST INTRIGUING RECENT VIDEO EVIDENCE

UFOS ON VIDEO: THE BEST OF 2012

Sightings of UFOs are intriguing, of course, but as an outside observer you always face the difficulty that the witness was there and you were not. All you can do is listen to their account and try to imagine what they saw, before deciding what it might have been. However, the increase in easy access videography has changed things.

I have assessed the video evidence from 2012 to see what it adds. There are almost 1,000 videos, so I've focused on UK examples. Extraordinarily, these accumulated over three million hits just on YouTube, revealing that images of UFOs continue to fascinate.

On the evening of 5 February, at Aveley in Essex, a semi-transparent saucer shape drifted over houses and was clearly caught on a mobile phone as it headed southwards towards the Thames, displaying a flashing light and hints of superstructure. In October 1974, the first recorded major British 'abduction' occurred in Aveley, involving an entire family experiencing missing time. The image resembles a large blimp used around sports stadia to film major events from the air. Indeed, Sky had a Premiere League football match on TV in London that night. Whether the blimp passed over Aveley is unknown, but the videographer argues: "I know what a blimp looks like and this was not (one)..." [1]

On 31 August, a daylight film was posted from Bolton, Lancashire. This lasts nearly three minutes and shows a dark oblong shape tumbling as it moves across the sky. The photographer describes it as looking like a floating sofa and it appears to move with the wind, given the cloud patterns visible. Though a good case to puzzle over it seems likely this was some wind-borne object such as a balloon. [2]

One of the most interesting videos is dated 13 October from Fraserburg, Aberdeenshire. A female resident of a house among open fields woke at 2am to discover pulsing/rotating reddish lights in a line over the horizon. The rest of the family joined to watch them and the lights were filmed for a minute or so. They pulse in and out, and at one point one light moves away from the others and exits right. The occupants then went back to bed, and the lights were only seen to have disappeared after daybreak, hours later. While this doesn't negate a UFO origin, such a long duration is more typical of something caused by a feature of the local environment – for instance, ground lights associated with vehicles working in distant fields. Highly experienced ufologist Malcolm Robinson is investigating, so we await his findings with interest. [3]

However, for me one report stood out. On 3 January, 14-year-old Nathan Thomas was in his bedroom at 3am using his computer in a house in the small town of Denbigh, North Wales. A storm was raging with strong winds (as I recall, living locally, because around the same time, after hearing a loud bang, I had to chase my bin down the road to prevent it turning into a UFO.) Nathan also heard a loud bang, but on looking outside saw no flying bin, just some odd lights across the estate towards fields and a small hill. He alerted his family, and his mother, brother and niece witnessed what he filmed on his new video camera – a Christmas present that was being used for the first time.

DENBIGH, 3 JANUARY, 2012

PETER GLYNN

NATHAN THOMAS

Easy access to videography has changed UFO accounts

Paranormal researcher Peter Glynn has befriended the family and posted news of his interviews with them and searches of the fields around the location. His amiable style and belief in the importance of the footage as possible evidence for extraterrestrial life is sincere. While I wouldn't go that far, the footage is fascinating. It reveals a number of white lights that pulse and flash and give the impression of being on the edge of a circular object that you might perceive in the gloom, though how real that impression is remains unclear. No sound was heard by the witnesses after they opened the window to rule out reflections and to film with a clear view. They thought the object was possibly over the estate itself, but distance is hard to judge in the dark (although Glynn thinks he can detect reflected light shining onto a car on a nearby road). After filming for about eight minutes, the family continued to watch for another half an hour before the angle of orientation changed and the lights vanished. They appear to have stayed more or less over the estate or just on the ridge of the hill beyond. Various theories have been considered – such as farm or quarry machinery or equipment involved in local flood defences – but nothing has emerged to support any of these. The police were contacted by the family and confirmed that no air traffic was in the area. However, they suggested that the lights were lanterns used by 'lampers' (hunters seeking rabbits in the woods, a practice that does occur locally and cropped up in the nearby 1974 Berwyn Mountains 'UFO landing' case (see **FT252:30-35**). This suggestion is feasible, if a little hard to square with the atrocious weather that night. Unsurprisingly, nobody has come forward.

Another theory involves the small B road that leads over the hill to Henllan. Viewed from the estate, this comes at an undulating angle towards the line of sight. Whilst Peter Glynn has made an admirable attempt to rule this out by walking the route, and also filming on another night from the same window without any returning images, the bad weather may be relevant. There was much water vapour that night and in misty conditions refraction of the lights from cars can create unusual mirage effects. However, the sheer number and persistence of lights seen in the footage is hard to equate with normal levels of traffic on this rural road in the middle of a very inhospitable night.

Time will tell where this case leads and the family have been contacted by *Fact or Faked?* the hit US TV series which deploys an array of experts with high tech equipment seeking to recreate and resolve images from 'paranormal' videos that go viral. If they follow through on their interest and visit Wales then their resources might offer the best chance of ruling out (or in) some of the possibilities. Meanwhile, those involved in this case appear impressed and have suggested this could prove one of the "top five UFO videos in the world". [4]

YOUTUBE / PETERGLYNNFILMS

NOTES

1 "UFO Caught on Camera, 2012", (emygee1972 – YouTube).

2 "UFO over Bolton Lancashire UK" (Warren Green – YouTube)

3 "UFO Spent four hours hovering above our rural home" (Sara Malm, Mail Online, 18 October 2012)

4 "Genuine UFO Sighting Wales 2012" (peterglynnfilms – YouTube)

BLASTS FROM THE PAST

FORTEAN TIMES BRINGS YOU THE NEWS THAT TIME FORGOT

43 WAS BIGFOOT AN ANCIENT LEMURIAN?

ULRICH MAGIN comes across an early newspaper story that puts a different spin on Sasquatch's origins

The American great ape first entered the limelight in 1958, when Jerry Crew and his team of road builders encountered gigantic human footprints in the soft soil at Bluff Creek in California. They reported their discovery to the *Humboldt Times*, which called the creature that had supposedly left the prints "Bigfoot". Thus, the modern US name for Sasquatch was born. This is the account of events given in all the major books on Sasquatch/Bigfoot.[1]

Such outlandish ideas as that Sasquatch is actually a space alien come to Earth or a manifestation of supernatural forces linked to UFOs were essentially afterthoughts to the whole story, coming long after the idea of an unknown hominid had been established.

The facts, as opposed to the speculation, are that Bigfoot got his name in 1958, and that when the reports were first heard they were linked to the Sasquatch of Canada as indicating the presence of a large ape.

Well, that's what I thought – until I found a newspaper article predating 1958 by three years and talking about Bigfoot not as an unidentified ape, but as a highly developed survivor of a lost continent. The discovery shows that Bigfoot was first reported within that distinctive Californian brew of flying saucers, lost continents, ascended masters, Theosophy and early New Age thought rather than the context of zoology or natural history. Perhaps this first version of Bigfoot was just too esoteric to gain much of a hold on the public imagination, and the far more likely – yet unlikely – idea of a giant indigenous American ape was better fitted to contemporary belief.

Be that as it may, the real first use of the word Bigfoot[2] appears to have been in the *San Francisco Examiner* of 30 October 1955:

CAPUCINE DESLOUIS

Bigfoot got his name in 1958... but I found a newspaper article from three years earlier talking about Bigfoot not as an unidentified ape, but as a highly developed survivor of a lost continent

Mount Shasta Footnote Rekindles Legend.

Old Big Foot has been trampling on the wild flowers of Mount Shasta again, and rekindled legend is leaping like a forest fire.

Big Foot is not content with just leaving a minor mystery of footprints behind him in the mountain's mud of time. He leaves a print with only three toes.

Such discoveries give great excitement to amateur archæologists, and a cynical pain to University of California experts.

Big Foot should be warned that he is going to be trailed, and if caught, he is one day going to have to toe the mark.

John W Chamberlain, a Yreka newspaperman when he isn't off in the wilderness spotting spoor, is the latest to discover tracings of Big Foot's strolls. Chamberlain and his fellow expeditioners, JJ Brown and Robert S Sanders, have a ready explanation.

Big Foot is a Lemurian.

This is a cross between the Old Man of the Mountains and the Oldest Race on earth. Nobody knows which arrived first.

The Lemurians lived in the mountains, loved salt and were something of showoffs. They would drop in at the country store and pay for a box of salt with a

big gold nugget.

Refugees from the lost continent, the Lemurians supposedly got swallowed up by great Pacific Ocean floods. This story is consistent with their taste for salt.

Chamberlain has estimated Big Foot's weight at 450lb [204kg]. The footprints are 50in [127cm] apart, and 15in [38cm] long.

Such a stride is a little awesome, because a big man like Saunders can manage only 33in [84cm]. Using a slide rule, Ely Culbertson's bridge rule of 10, and advanced mathematics, Chamberlain has come up with Big Foot's weight quicker than a carnival guesser.

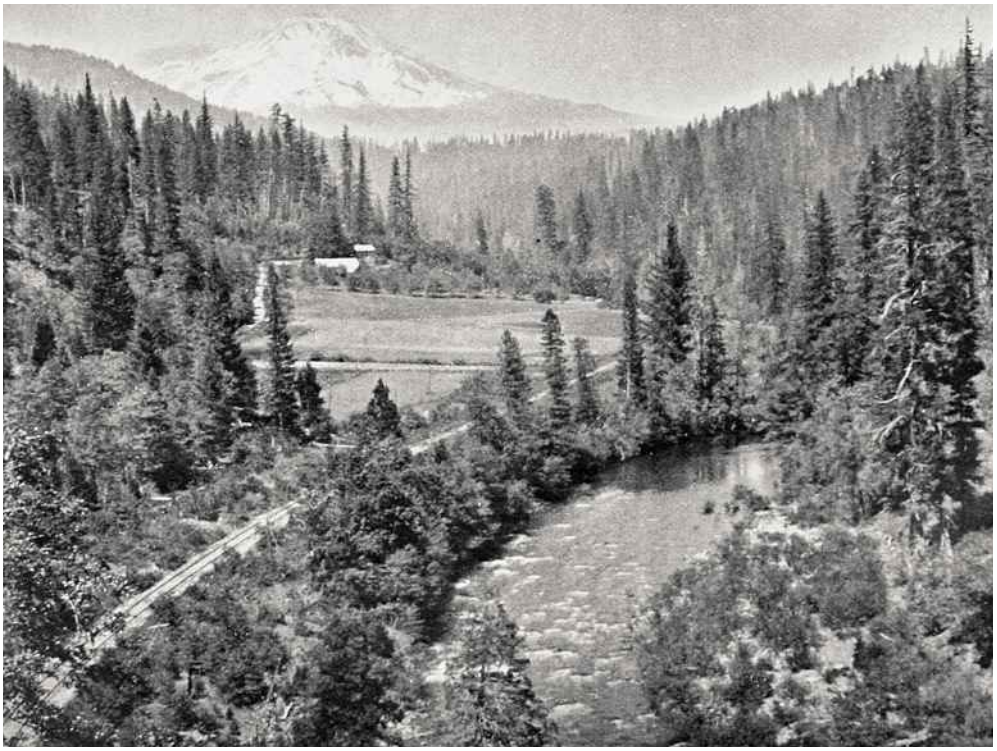
Chamberlain believes he has found traces of the existence of another race – perhaps the one known as The Old Ones.

"Many researchers have said that ancestors of the ancient tribe were natives of Lemuria, the lost continent, which long ago was inundated by floods," he recalled.

"Stories current in some areas have mentioned mysterious persons, the epitome of nobility and regal bearing, who have from time to time made purchases, especially of salt, at stores in the vicinity of Mount Shasta. The visitors left gold nuggets as payment without accepting any change."

Legends build upon legend. Some residents of the Mount Shasta area note that the area now is the headquarters of the "I Am" religious group. Its followers believe that the "ascended masters" live inside Mount Shasta. [3]

The "I Am" Movement, a Theosophical splinter group founded by Guy and Edna Ballard in the 1930s, is also associated with the 1950s flying saucer contactees, and George Adamski and George Hunt Williamson met through their initial interest in these teachings. Williamson later testified to have witnessed Adamski's meeting with Venusians – and to have seen Venusian footprints in the soft soil. Bigfoot as one of the Mount Shasta-dwelling ancient masters, visiting local shops and paying in gold nuggets, did not catch on, though.



ABOVE: A view across the Californian forests towards the distant Mount Shasta – home to the ascended master Bigfoot.

Then, 1958 saw the "official" beginning of the word Bigfoot – and interestingly, far from being reported as an American ape, it was still seen as a case of a human gone wild:

Taxidermist Says Bigfoot Is Giant Indian Gone Wild.

Seattle, Wash. – AP – A Seattle taxidermist says that Bigfoot, the creature whose huge, humanlike footprints have the natives of the Weitchpec area of northern California guessing, is an Indian gone wild.

Al Corbett said Tuesday that he and another taxidermist, Bob Titmus of Anderson, Calif., inspected the tracks 25 miles [40km] north of Weitchpec and found the prints to be "very large, definitely human tracks."

Corbett said the clearest print was 16in [40cm] long, 5in [13cm] across at the heel and 7in [18cm] across at the ball of the foot.

"Broke His Chains"

A logger in the area, Gerald Crew, last week brought out a plaster cast of a clear footprint. Corbett said Titmus had furnished Crew with the plaster with which to make the cast.

"The story behind this is that there was a mentally deficient Indian boy who was kept chained by his parents," Corbett said.

"When the boy was 17 years old, 28 years ago, he broke the chains and disappeared. The Indians found his clothes but never saw him again. They said he had extremely large feet.

"We talked it over a great deal and figured this man now must be 6ft 7in [2m] to 7ft 6in [228cm] tall. We thought he might weigh as much as 400lb [180kg]. He made firm footprints in hard ground.

"Measuring the footprints for a distance of more than 60ft [18m], we found the average stride was 50in [127cm]. We checked this against the stride of a man 6ft 4in [193cm] tall, with long legs, and his stride was 30 in [76cm].

"We were told by people who saw footprints made when this unknown man was running that they were 10 feet [3m] apart.

"I know positively this is a human being.

"It seems logical that it is this Indian who disappeared and is living wild. He does his travelling at night. He has not molested anyone. We learn these tracks now have been appearing for the last 10 years."

Corbett said Titmus was preparing to set up camera traps in an effort to obtain a photo of Bigfoot. [4]

That large, human-like footprints might be "explained" as those of a big native American at a time when nobody was aware that giant apes lived in the neighbourhood is easy to understand, but how anybody could ever mistake the creature in the Patterson movie for an "ascended master" completely eludes me. The formative years of Bigfoot, it seems, still hold a few surprises – not least that the creature's very first mention in print places the mighty man-ape in the same ecological niche as the saucers from Venus! [5]

NOTES

1 Don Hunter and Rene Dahinden, *Sasquatch*, New American Library, 1975, p84; John Green: *Sasquatch – The Apes Among Us*, Hancock House, 2006, p65 ff.

2 Perhaps American researchers have found earlier uses of the term and will be happy to correct me. All major books on the mystery say that the word Bigfoot (rather than reports of big hairy apemen) first was used in connection with the Crew case.

3 Quoted in Morris K Jessup, *The UFO Annual*, New York, Citadel Press 1956, pp325-326. Jessup has a second news clipping on the Mount Shasta Lemurians from *The Psychic Observer*, 10 Sept 1955 (Jessup, p. 288), but it doesn't call the Lemurians 'Bigfoot'. However, it mentions that at Mount Shasta "strange cattle, unlike any others in America, emerge from the woods, suddenly take fright, as though they have sensed an invisible signal, and immediately run back to where they came from." I am not aware of any more recent strange cow reports from Bigfoot country.

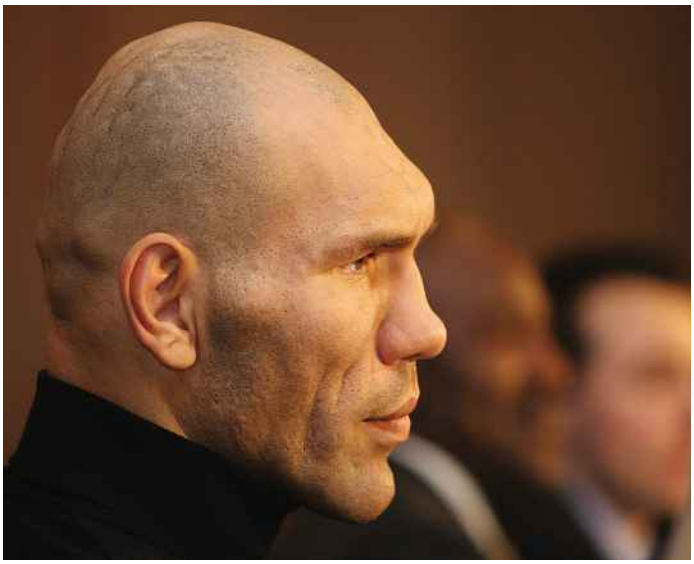
4 *Milwaukee Journal*, 9 Oct 1958

5 This is not to say there were no prior witness reports of big apes in America – there were. Already on 7 Nov 1870, under the headline "The Wild Men of California – Their Appearance – The Story of an Old Hunter", the *New York Times* reported a story of gorilla sightings from Crow Canon and Orestimba Creek, California, taken from the *Antioch Ledger*.

SNOWMAN'S LAND

For many years, research into Russia's hairy hominids was frowned upon by the Soviet authorities, but now all that has changed, as **EDWARD CRABTREE** reports from the Russian Federation, where a new appetite for the unexplained has seen the yeti's rehabilitation. But are reports of Siberian Snowmen all that they seem, asks veteran Bigfooter **LOREN COLEMAN** – and what should we make of recent claims of giant footprints, Yeti hairs and DNA sequencing coming out of Russia?

Nikolai Valuev is a big man in modern Russia. A former boxing champion turned politician, he can be seen benevolently plugging mobile phone offers on posters and TV adverts all over Russia. Of Tatar extraction, his physical stature is as big as his fame, so you might not want to argue with him when he tells you of his belief in the Russian yeti. "Proof that the yeti exists," he defiantly informed the *Independent* (17 Sept 2011) "appeared before the Russian revolution." Valuev even took a plane to Siberia to do some seeking of his own and to put in a guest appearance at a Relict Hominid conference that was being staged there (see **FT282:9**).



MATTHIAS KERN / GETTY IMAGES

LEFT: Nikolai Valuev – former boxing champion turned politician and yeti apologist.

THE SOVIETS AND THE 'SNOWMAN PROBLEM'

Valuev's claim aside, the first reference to the *snyeshni chyelovek* (literally 'snowy person') saw print in Russian in 1908. Whilst yeti believers would have no difficulty in accepting that the world's largest nation, complete with vast areas of forest and non-arable land, could be the habitat for an unknown-to-science primate, it was many decades before this hypothesis gained anything like official sanction.

WORLD WAR II BROUGHT CLAIMS THAT WILD MEN HAD BEEN TANGLING WITH THE MILITARY

The turning point may have been World War II, which brought in its wake claims that wild men had been tangling with the military in the Soviet territories. One of the better-known stories of this kind concerns Dagestan in 1941, where a Lieutenant-Colonel of the medical service of the Soviet army called VS Karapetyan was able to inspect a shaggy brown-haired wild man before it was, alas, executed.

However, by 1958 the Soviet Academy of Sciences, purportedly with Khrushchev's personal approval, set up a 'Snowman Commission'. The aim of this body was to find evidence of surviving Neanderthals in the Pamir Mountains. Among those involved was Professor Boris F Porshnev, a

ALEXANDER TOMLINSON

RIA NOVOSTI / SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY

ABOVE: Igor Burtsev compares the cast of a footprint found in the Pamir Altai in 1979 with his own foot. **BELOW:** Boris Porshnev and his rehabilitated collected writings.

respected academic who was also a strong advocate of the existence of relict hominids. A booklet saw print following this venture; but, following a tense meeting in 1959, the project, and with it Porshnev, fell into official disfavour.

Despite this, the work of individual investigators managed to survive. Doctor Marie-Jeanne Koffman interviewed some 4,000 witnesses of the Almasty (the local name for the wild man) in the Caucasus (see **FT246:46-52** for a more recent expedition in search of the Almasty). Igor Burtsev ventured into the Pamir-Altai in Tajikistan and took casts of large footprints found on the banks of the Siama River in August 1979, thus giving rise to a now iconic picture: Burtsev's barefoot set alongside the contrastingly enormous footprint cast that he had found. In the 1980s, monthly meetings on relict hominids were being held in the State Darwin Museum in Moscow; it was all weighty enough to provoke considered interest from abroad. Myra Shackley, a British lecturer in Archæological Science, devoted a book entitled *Wildmen: Yeti, Sasquatch and Neanderthal Enigma* (1983) to detailed descriptions of such creatures from Mongolia, the Pamirs, the Caucasus, and Siberia. Her conclusion was that: "Many of the sightings reported by reindeer herders and fishermen appear to be authentic, but there is undoubtedly a gloss of folktale".

FOLLOWING THE DISSOLUTION OF THE SOVIET UNION, AN INTEREST IN THE UNEXPLAINED HAS SURFACED IN RUSSIAN LIFE

GLASNOST FOR THE SNOWMAN

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a healthy but sometimes indiscriminate interest in the unexplained in general has surfaced in Russian life. In this new climate, yeti hunters need not worry about falling foul of ideological trends and can openly co-operate with their counterparts in North America – although any kind of government funding is now less likely than ever. Porshnev has been posthumously rehabilitated: a weighty tome of his (untranslated) collected writings, *The Riddle of the Snowman: Contemporary Questions about Relict Hominids* was published in 2012 by a Moscow publishing house called Algorithm.

The snowman question is also touched on regularly by two paranormal weeklies in Russia which compete for the sometimes uneasy market niche mixing forteana and general sensationalism – *NLO: Unbelievable Legendary Evidence* and *Secrets of the Twentieth Century.*

In March 2012 (issue no 5), the former publication featured an article by Professor Valentin Sapunov. The St Petersburg based Sapunov is a kind of contemporary equivalent of Porshnev and the author of the (as yet untranslated) *The Secrets of the Snowman: Between Man and Beast* (2007). His article in *NLO*, "The Yeti of Malaya Vishera", focuses on the marshy and sparsely populated area of Novgorod in north-western Russia where the town of the title can be found. Here, there has been a long tradition of people coming across 'white-eyed wonders' stretching back to the pagan days of the sixth century. More recently, evidence has been collected of sightings of red-haired man-beasts seen there, sometimes in family groups, and in 2003 footprints were found. Spurred on by this, Sapunov recently investigated the region and came across unusual teeth marks in the trees, 2.5in (6.4cm) above ground level.

Sapunov squares up to the issue of why a body of one of these creatures has not to date been produced by proposing that they are clever enough to avoid mankind. *20th Century Secrets,* (April 2012, no 17) meanwhile carried an article with the rhetorical title "Is the Yeti From Another Dimension?" This grapples with the same question in a rather more esoteric way, and also refers to ancient history in which Finno-Ugric tribes had legends of actually being ruled by wildmen with special powers.

Russian television has also been pandering to interest in the Snowman. In 2009, a documentary broadcast three seconds of footage of what appears to be a large, upright, man-like ape loitering in the Siberian woodlands. The shot is quite clear, even if brief, and was taken inadvertently by someone who has chosen to remain anonymous. In fact, Siberia has been generating a lot of interest of late: in particular, the Kemerovo region has given rise to talk of the 'Kuzbass Bigfoot' (named after another term for the region). The southern part of the region, Gornaya Shoriya, has produced 15 testimonials concerning hominid-like creatures in the vicinity, including the complaint that the creatures were making off with the locals' livestock.

Some even bigger hitters than boxer Mr Valuev have also been drawn into the yeti debate. The American ramblers magazine *Outdoor Life* found itself in receipt of so many comments about yetis in the Siberian taiga that when they achieved the coup of a written interview with Vladimir Putin (19 May 2011), the title could not help but ask: "Are there any yetis or wood-goblins there?"

"Anything is possible," came the unfazed reply. "I would recommend you to come and search."

A YETI FOR TATARSTAN?

Another feature of Russian life in post-Soviet times has been the growth of semi-autonomous regions where once suppressed ethnic groups have revived their cultural identities within the Russian Federation. About 500 miles (800km) to the east of Moscow lies Tatarstan, an undulating and forested area much of which is taken up with isolated villages where Tatar, a Turkic dialect, is mainly spoken. The capital of Tatarstan is Kazan, a thriving, sophisticated city that considers itself to be the capital of all Tatar people worldwide. Little wonder, then, that in Kazan, the Tatar folk culture and its legends are jealously upheld in its monuments and public displays.

A rare snow leopard called Ak Bars is the official symbol of Tatarstan; it has a local ice hockey team and bank named after it, and an ambitious new monument to it is due to be built on the banks of the Volga River in honour of its protective guardsmanship. Then there is Zilant, a flying serpent who one can see in mosaic form on the ceilings of the local metro stations. He is said to watch over the treasures which lie at the bottom of Lake Caban in central Kazan.

It should be no surprise that Tatar culture also has its own native wood goblin: he is called Shurale (*shoo-rah-leh*). This semi-malevolent wildman-like figure appears in sculpture form outside the Kamal theatre in central Kazan, has been immortalised in a poem by Gabdullah Tukay (a local hero-scribe) and a ballet by Farid Yarullin. He even has a local amusement Park named in his honour.

Writing in the *Tatar Exclusive Web Gazette*, Sabirzyan Badtretdin recounts a Tatar tale about Shurale that has been passed down from grandfathers to the current generation. Horses had been going missing from the village during the night and were discovered the following morning in an exhausted condition. The village elders were consulted as to what to do about this problem. Their advice? To cover the horses' saddles in tar and then release them. Sure enough, when the Sun rose the next day, the villagers were awoken by the ghastly cries of a hairy, human-like creature that had become glued to the back of one of the horses. This was promptly slain and was recognised as being Shurale.

This macabre little story could easily be dismissed as nothing more than a tale to be told by the fireside, but it does have an intriguing echo in a better-documented story. In January 2002, the Russian journal *Ural Stalker* carried a report by the biologist Nikolai Adveev. This told of a Wildman who had appeared in the village of Ibragimova in the southern Urals in 1913. The creature had been blamed for the killing of domestic animals, and it too was eventually captured and killed. Again, it was identified by the locals as 'Shurale'. However, in this case officials from outside the area had a chance to inspect the body. They described it as covered in black hair, with a pronounced brow, no forehead and red eyes.

EDWARD CRABTREE

ABOVE: Two illustrations of the Shurale – one from a book of folktales and the other a child's painting on display on the walls of the Tukay metro station in central Kazan.

EDWARD CRABTREE

ABOVE: Another child's depiction of the Shurale from the Tukay metro station in Kazan. **BELOW:** The winged Tatar snow leopard on the Ak Bars hockey team insignia.

Might Shurale be a distorted folk memory of real encounters with relict hominids? Certainly, those who are steeped in yeti and Bigfoot literature should have no difficulty in making a number of unforced parallels between descriptions of these and the way Shurale is depicted in folklore.

Shurale's name refers to his trademark deep laugh; indeed, many a Bigfoot report refers to the howling or yelping noises that the creature makes. Shurale has a horn on the top of his head; the yeti's head is often said to be cone-shaped. Shurale lives in birds' nests; Sasquatch investigators have stumbled upon 'nests' of twigs that they have ascribed to the creature's intervention. Shurale appears in the twilight; again, the yeti and Bigfoot are thought to be mostly active in twilit and nocturnal hours.

Lastly, stories involving Shurale often have him poaching livestock; the people of Gornaya Shoriya might testify that the modern Russian yeti does the same. Of course, it must also be admitted that the Shurale of legend is granted the power of speech and has a strange predilection for tickling people to death. However, the Ak Bars is a catalogued and recognised snow leopard and yet is often characterised, in stylised Tatar folk art, as having wings and carrying the Sun on his back.

WHERE LEGEND MEETS FOLK-MEMORY

The Native Americans have about 100 names in their different dialects for the 'sacred beast' often known as Sasquatch, and magical powers are ascribed to him. Likewise, the Tibetan yeti is a quasi-mythological deity who takes his place as part and parcel of the Buddhist cosmology.

MIGHT SHURALE BE A DISTORTED FOLK MEMORY OF REAL ENCOUNTERS WITH RELICT HOMINIDS?

Indeed, if there were hominids surviving on the outskirts of human society then would not one expect, in suitably embroidered form, the world's folklore and myth to alert us to this fact?

To see if Shurale might after all be a race memory of an embellished zoological fact, we can go right back to one of the main ancestors of the Tatar people: the Golden Hordes. These were the Mongols who swept into Russia taking their prisoners with them. One of those taken was Johann (Hans) Schiltberger, a travelling German nobleman. From his captors, he reported in 1430, he learnt about "the Wildmen of the mountains" who "have nothing in common with ordinary human beings". This is thought to be the first literary allusion to the Wildman. Perhaps, after all, Tatar culture holds one of the missing jigsaw pieces to the enigma of man-like apes. FT

For earlier Russian manimal sightings and hunts, see FT26:6, 45:51-52, 53:22, 54:22-23, 62:8, 67:32-34, 246:46-52 282:9, 284:13.

SOURCES

Lyalya Gilmanova, ed., *Legends of Kazan* (Kazan: Multimedia Publishing House, 2007)

Rupert Matthews, *Bigfoot: True Life Encounters With Legendary Ape Men* (London: Arcutus Publishing Limited, 2008)

John Napier, *Bigfoot: the Yeti and Sasquatch in Myth and Reality* (London: Sphere Books, 1972)

Myra Shackley, *Wildmen: Yeti, Sasquatch and Neanderthal Enigma* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1983)

Studiengruppe Primates (www.stgr-primates.de/news.html)

The Tatar Gazette (http://tatar.yuldash.com/eng_index.html)

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

EDWARD CRABTREE has spent most of his adult lilfe teaching English and related subjects both in the UK and abroad. From 2007 to 2009 he taught in Nizhnevartovsk, West Siberia. For the past three years he has been teaching English in Kazan, Tatarstan, in the Russian Federation. It is this last experience which forms the raw material for this article.

WATCHING THE FUR FLY

LOREN COLEMAN reports on the latest controversies concerning Bigfoot DNA

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

In October 2012, the Zoological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences was partially involved in announcing the results of DNA tests on a tuft of hair said to be from a Siberian Snowman. It was found a year ago in the Azasskaya Cave in the Mount Shoriya area, Kemerovo region, Siberia.

"We had 10 samples of hair to study, and have concluded that they belong to [a] mammal, but not a human," said Professor Valentin Sapunov of the Russian State Hydrometeorological Institute, who was quoted in the *Daily Mail*.

"The Yeti's DNA is evidently less than one per cent different from that of a human," added the *Siberian Times*.

But the results were regarded as dubious, and Idaho State University anthropologist Dr Jeff Meldrum had already declared his belief that local officials had staged the entire Snowman scenario with the local tourism trade in mind.

"It was a very awkward feeling, because here I was a guest and this was clearly orchestrated," Meldrum told reporter Lee Speigel of the *Huffington Post*; he confirmed his position in conversation with me.

"I was happy when I learned there was interest by Russian government authorities to promote and sponsor the organisation of a [Yeti] institute. I thought that, at the very least, the official recognition of an institute – of the need and the desirability to investigate these claims – was a positive step."

Meldrum's suspicions began when trip organizer Igor Burtsev, the head of the Yeti Institute, pointed the invited researchers to a specific cave.

"Somebody found a right footprint. But I thought it was a little vague and not really distinct. It was a pretty expansive cave and there could've been footprints all over the place, if there was something tromping around in there in the sand."

Meldrum decided to go further into the cave on his own, followed by a cameraman, but then one of the regional government people saw the group and called them back. Then, Meldrum discovered two further impressions – both made by a right foot.

"I thought that was kind of odd, and then someone picked up a little tuft of hair that was apparently pressed into the footprint. At that point, I wasn't comfortable with the situation and had an inkling of what might be happening," Meldrum told *Der Spiegel*.

He felt that if it were a genuine series of tracks, then obviously the researchers would have found both rights and lefts. Also, he wondered why the tracks were all going out of the cave, with none coming in. Then, conveniently, a bed of moss was found, but Meldrum could not find a single sample of hair or animal debris in this supposed "bed".

It suddenly dawned on him that everything that had happened in the alleged Yeti cave was probably a staged event for his and the media's benefit, designed to push the local "Day of the Yeti" ski tourism holiday in that area of Siberia. Based on this experience, Meldrum considers any evidence, including the test results publicised in October 2012, as suspect.

ABOVE: A hair from a Siberian Snowman according to Professor Valentin Sapunov.

THE KETCHUM COMMOTION

For years, as many in the Bigfoot field know, there has been a long-term DNA study taking place in Dr Melba Ketchum's privately owned DNA lab in Texas. Dr Ketchum began, back in 2011, to use her Facebook account to address people who wanted to get the latest news about the project. On 4 November 2011, she wrote: "We have assembled a renowned team, each of us with our own specialties to make this project 'extraordinary'. If everyone will hang in there, I promise it will be worth the wait. We have the proof, now just give us the opportunity to present it in a form that will even convince skeptics. Thanks so much for all of your emails and support. Best wishes to all."

She followed this on 3 December 2011, with this: "For all of the people speculating on the Erickson project, Adrian and I have agreed to set aside the DNA to tell you that his group is a successful participant in this project. His research project to obtain the DNA samples is separate from us. His samples will be in the paper along with all of the successful submitters. And once again, please know that we are at the mercy of the journal as to when we can announce. Thanks!"

These postings, in many ways, set up what happened from November 2012 to January 2013, when exchanges about the Ketchum DNA Bigfoot project were played out in the social media first, and only lifted to the mainstream media later. Here's what we know, mostly from Dr Ketchum's own Facebook revelations and Twitter messages:

Sometime in the autumn of 2012, an allegedly frustrated member of Ketchum's own DNA staff shared (or, to some, "leaked") a copy of the unpublished results and/or finalised paper to Igor Burtsev in Russia.

On 23 November 2012, Dr Burtsev, listed in this context as head of the International Center of Hominology, took it upon himself to announce on his Facebook page the completion of Dr Ketchum's project to sequence Bigfoot DNA. Burtsev reported the results would show that: "It is human like us only different, a hybrid of a human with an unknown species… The hybridisation event could not have occurred more than 15,000 years ago according to the mitochondrial data in some samples."

Dr Ketchum obviously felt bound to respond. On 24 November, on her official Facebook page, she posted a press release on the Bigfoot DNA project based on 109 samples.

The press release noted, in part: "Sasquatch nuDNA is a novel, unknown hominin related to *Homo sapiens* and other primate species. Our data indicate that the North American Sasquatch is a hybrid species, the result of males of an unknown hominin species crossing with female *Homo sapiens*."

This created a firestorm of "Sasquatch mated with human women" stories in the media, with blogs, forums, groups, and news sites discussing the "Bigfoot DNA" announcement as if Sasquatch proof had been found. But it had not. For the rest of 2012, and into the New Year, social media saw heated exchanges. One of the first, also on Facebook, was started by Burtsev, who sought to explain his leaking of the Ketchum DNA results. He posted a statement, which boils down to this one sentence: "I don't want the new discovery… to wait for another half a century to be recognised by haughty official scientific establishment!"

Now people wonder if the paper will ever be published because of these leaks. Most critical-thinking cryptozoologists and Bigfooters are taking a "wait and see" attitude. Or as University of Wisconsin-Madison anthropologist John Hawks blogged on 26 Nov 2012: "Until I see the data, I am withholding judgment… The original sequence data must be made available to the public. No data, no discovery."

The Wild Dog

of Ennerdale

LINDA LYON / GETTY IMAGES

In 1810, something strange and deadly arrived in the Lake District and started killing sheep in a gruesome fashion. While locals feared the beast might be some kind of demon, **CRISPIN ANDREWS** makes the case for an earthly, but nonetheless surprising, identity for the killer, arguing that the fells of Ennerdale were being stalked by a creature that was hungry and a long, long way from home....

It was dusk, on 10 May 1810 when the beast appeared. Mossop, a farmer from Thornholme on the eastern border of what is now the Lake District National Park, saw a strange animal in the bushes by the River Calder, a few miles north-east of where, these days, you'd find Sellafield nuclear power station. A stray dog, possibly. Large and carnivorous, almost certainly. A stranger in those parts, definitely.

Today, sheep farming is a big part of the Lake District's economy. Back then, even more people's livelihoods depended on their herds. In sheep country, a stray dog, an eagle or even a particularly daring fox was a real problem. It wasn't long, however, before Lakesfolk realised that something new, different and deadly was stalking their fells.

Soon after Mossop's encounter, sheep carcasses started turning up around Ennerdale Water and Waswater. The unfortunate ungulates often had their throats ripped out, but remained otherwise untouched. Whatever was killing the sheep would eat the soft organs and leave the rest of the body. Sometimes it would just drink its victim's blood. In the first few weeks, scores of sheep lay scattered across the fells. Afraid for their children, Lakesfolk locked their doors at night. Some even thought a demon had been sent forth to torment them. They gave it a name: the Wild Dog of Ennerdale.

Dogs had always been common in these parts; but although man's best friend has always been partial to a bit of sheep worrying, carnage like this was surely beyond any dog. Bears, lynx and wolves were long extinct. But what else but a predator of this size could cause such mutilations? Foxes, badgers and pine martens were the biggest local carnivores. The cause of the sheep predation remained a mystery.

Whilst Lakesfolk crossed their fingers and hoped that the hunt would catch the elusive beast, 17,000 miles away in what was then Van Diemen's Land and is now Tasmania, European colonists could have told the people of Ennerdale what they were dealing with.

In last year's film *The Hunter*, Willem Dafoe chases around the Tasmanian wilderness, looking for the last thylacine. The marsupial predator that unimaginative European settlers

LEFT: A view over Ennerdale today, with Ennerdale Water visible in the background. What was stalking these fells and killing sheep in 1810?

HARDEEN / HULTON ARCHIVE / GETTY IMAGES)

ABOVE: A cart loaded with bracken makes its way up the road at Ennerdale. **BELOW:** William Dickinson recorded eyewitness testimony concerning the Wild Dog.

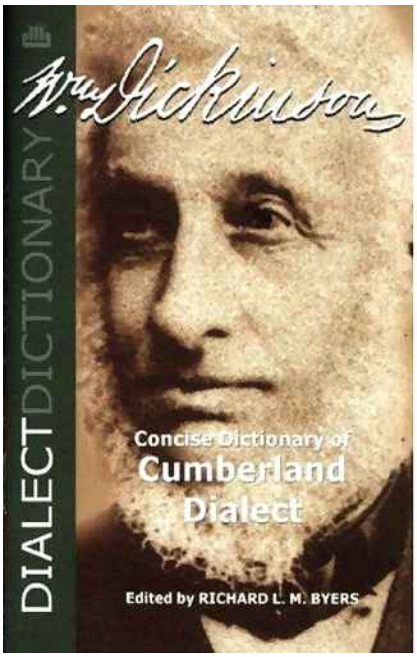
dubbed the 'Tasmanian tiger' or 'Tasmanian wolf' because it had stripes and looked like a dog, officially died out in the wild in 1930 and in captivity in 1936. Ever since, there have been alleged sightings in Tasmania, and on the Australian mainland, where thylacines supposedly died out 2,000 years ago (see **FT49:5-7, 46-47; 62:54-56**; **165:21**). In 1810, however, there were still plenty of 'tigers' in Tasmania. Is it possible that one of them turned up in the Lake District, all those years ago?

A CUMBRIAN THYLACINE?

On 29 October 1932, the strange case of the Ennerdale Wild Dog appeared in the *Cumberland News*. A Lakeland terrier and a Cocker spaniel had been indulging in a spot of sheep worrying around Buttermere Fells and some well informed scribe had dug into the archives and come up with an old account, written in 1864, by William Dickinson. Dickinson, author of *The Cumberland Glossary* – a dictionary of Cumbrian dialect – claimed that the Wild Dog story was based on the eyewitness testimony of John Steel, a farmer from Asby. Steel claimed to have hunted and eventually killed this unusual creature – but not before it had become the terror of the fells.

"No one knew to whom the dog belonged or from where he came," Dickinson wrote. "He was a smooth-haired dog of tawny-mouse colour, with dark streaks of tiger fashion over his back."

In the known world, there were at the time only two animals with such coats. Assuming that the Lakesfolk hadn't put away so much



"HE WAS A SMOOTH-HAIRED DOG OF TAWNY COLOUR, WITH DARK STREAKS OF TIGER FASHION"

ale that they'd transferred teeth, claws and an appetite for mutton on to a zebra duiker antelope (*Cephalophus zebra*), there was only one other creature that matched Steel's description. The Wild Dog of Ennerdale must have been a thylacine. Dickinson goes on to explain that the beast appeared to be a cross between a mastiff and a greyhound, was strongly built, well fed and fit. Some thylacines (like Fleay's in the photos opposite) had round mastiff-like muzzles. All are long, athletic and greyhound-like. The poor sheep didn't stand a chance.

According to experts, the Wild Dog's feeding habits were also thylacine-like. "When food was abundant, thylacines became wasteful, consuming only selected parts of the live victim," says Dr Stephen Sleightholme. Sleightholme, who has put together the Thylacine International Specimen Database, explains how Tasmanian tigers would tear open the rib cage, consume the soft organs and some blood, taking flesh only if hungry. "The throat was occasionally torn out and the blood lapped up," he adds.

According to Dickinson, Steel had told him something similar way back in the mid-19th century. "He [the Wild Dog] fed on the sheep and lambs before the carcasses had time to cool," Dickinson wrote. "From one sheep he was scared during the feast, and when the shepherd examined the carcass, the flesh had been torn from the ribs behind the shoulder and the still beating heart was laid bare and visible… He was once seen to run down a ram at early dawn, and without killing it, to tear out or swallow lumps of living flesh from the hindquarters of the tortured animal."

Stephen Sleightholme explains that when European settlers arrived in Tasmania in 1803, and then started to introduce sheep in the 1820s, thylacines quickly adapted to catching this new but easy, slow-moving prey. So too did the Lake District thylacine, it seems. But according to Sleightholme, the predators were blood drinkers by necessity rather than design. "The ribs of mature ewes were often too strong for the thylacine to break and the animal was left to die with a patch of flesh ripped from the underarm area," he says.

Ronald Gunn, a London Zoological Society researcher who studied thylacines in the mid-19th century, observed that they would kill multiple prey animals. Cameron Campbell, creator of the Thylacine Museum website, adds that some thylacines became habitually wasteful when there was a lot of easy prey about. Tasmanian conservationist Nick Mooney thinks thylacines have had too harsh a press in this regard, though. "Any carnivore will start at the best parts, blood being the best food," he says. "If it's a big prey animal (like a sheep) that's all it can physically eat, if it's a small prey animal the predator eats the lot."

Again, Steel's testimony fits with this observation. "He [the Wild Dog] would sometimes wantonly destroy seven or eight sheep in one night," Dickinson recorded.

During a three-month rampage, Dickinson estimates that the Wild Dog of Ennerdale killed over 300 sheep. Ronald Gunn's observations further support the theory that a thylacine was loose in the Lake District in 1810. "They [thylacines] never or very rarely return to the dead carcass after killing it," he wrote in 1863. Nick Mooney suggests that this was because, in Tasmania, any carcass a thylacine left for a few hours would be quickly consumed by scavenging Tasmanian devils. In the Lake District, there were no such ravenous second-string predators and so the thylacines work was left scattered around the fells.

Mooney adds: "In nature, predators sometimes kill to excess because they believe lean times are coming. Foxes and other canids stash the excess. People do the same when fishing; they get overexcited and catch more than they can use." In the remote Lake District, alone and thousands of miles from home and others of its kind, it would have been easy for the Ennerdale thylacine to feel that times were very hard indeed.

Through Steel's testimony, Dickinson paints a picture of an animal with keen senses that hid out on high ground, or rocky terrain, where it had a good vantage point and its sandy colour offered camouflage. It ventured to the lowlands only to feed. For a few weeks, locals thought it would be easy to drive the Wild Dog from cover and shoot it, once it was in the open – but they were wrong. The beast eluded the hunt time and again, escaping into new pastures or, on occasion, doubling back behind its pursuers to start a fresh killing spree the following day.

Dickinson writes of epic chases where huntsmen and their dogs pursued the beast all over the eastern fells. "On one occasion,' he writes, "he was run from Kinnisisde fells through to Lamplugh and Dean, crossed the River Marron on several occasions and rested in a plantation near to Clifton." Here, Dickinson claims the beast rested until spooked by gunmen on foot, who "ran him to the [River] Derwent and there lost him after an exhausting chase of nearly 20 miles [32km]."

One such chase went right past the road where Cumbrian writer Shawn Williamson's childhood home would one day stand. Williamson, whose 2005 novel *Mauler* is based on the old tale, says of the Wild Dog: "It seemed cleverer and more resourceful than both the men and dogs who hunted it." Dickinson adds that the beast was so fierce that normally brave sheep dogs cowered the moment they picked up its scent. On one occasion it turned on a pursuing hound and killed it with one bite.

Williamson has been at work on a sequel: *Mauler 2*. Once again, there's some artistic license, with the literary thylacine attacking people as well as sheep. But this time, the story is set in modern times. In the early 21st century, Australian and US scientists tried, and failed, to clone a Tasmanian tiger (see **FT124:7**; **165:21**). In Williamson's fictional world, some savvier Cumbrian tinkermen succeed with DNA from the original *Mauler*. Genetic memory leads the beast back to the Lake District and another killing spree. This time, however, locals mistake its signature killing style for that of a big cat; hardly surprising when black leopards are regularly spotted in the Lake District.

HUNTED

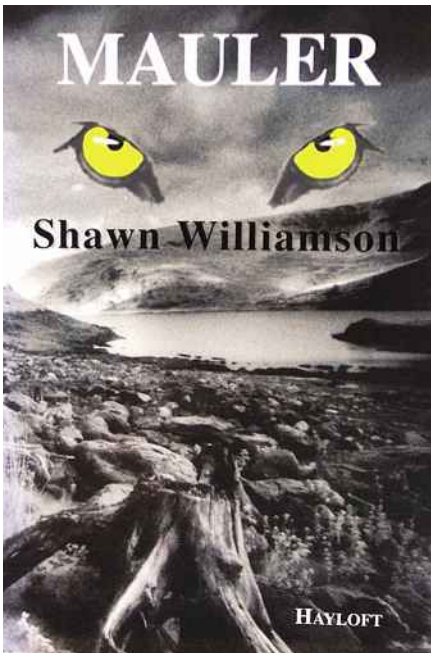
Just past the disused Camerton Brickworks, two and a half miles (4km) south east of Maryport, there's a public footpath that leads to a stone seat. Williamson, also a sculptor, made this seat with a group of local youngsters, to commemorate the Millennium. It overlooks the River Derwent, with the remains of Anglo-Saxon farming terraces visible in the fields behind it. On this very spot, some 200 years ago, a frantic life and death struggle took place.

It's not too hard to difficult to imagine the scene. Exploring an unfamiliar environment, or perhaps searching in vain for others of its kind, the Lake District thylacine slinks through the bushes beside the river.

Here, unlike the fells around Ennerdale, the creature's sandy fur does not blend in with its surroundings. In these open green fields, it can be seen. The trek has

ALL PICS COURTESY DR STEPHEN SLEIGHTHOLME

TOP AND ABOVE LEFT: Photographs of the last known captive thylacine, taken in1933 at the new Beaumaris Zoo in Hobart by Dr David Fleay. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Other Hobart specimens photographed in 1910.



CHRIS COUPLAND

ABOVE: Shawn Williamson, whose novel *Mauler* tells a fictional version of the story of Ennerdale's Wild Dog.

been a long and thirsty one, and eventually the beast can resist the clear flowing river no longer. Leaving the safety of the undergrowth, however, is a mistake.

On high ground, overlooking the river, keen eyes watch. Several hours earlier, the Melbreak hunt had received a message. The beast had been seen around the brickworks. As soon as the men and hounds could be mustered, the hunt was out. They'd picked up the beast's scent at once, but lost it in the woods near the river. But these were experienced huntsmen; if the beast had escaped across the fields towards Camerton Hall, they would have seen it. After an hour or more waiting downwind for it to make its move, they got their chance. The Master of the Hunt motions silently for his men to ready the dogs.

Alerted by the commotion, the beast abandons its drink and scrambles back into the undergrowth. But the dogs have its scent once more and the men sight of it. The woods here are not dense enough to hide in, and the men have guns.

With the hunt closing in, the animal has one chance – to make a dash for it. Out it bolts, across the clearing and towards the bank. At once, the men see it and call for efforts to be redoubled. There, a few hundred feet in front of them, is the creature

THE WILD DOG OF ENNERDALE LOOKED AND ACTED LIKE A THYLACINE – HOW DID IT GET THERE?

terrorising their farms. It's at least the size of an Alsatian, with a huge, snapping mouth. What a trophy it will make.

Today, Camerton Hall still stands on the other side of this field. It is said to have been erected by Inigo Jones on the site of a 14th century Pele tower, one of many such fortifications built in the region to protect locals from Scottish border raiders.

Dickinson writes that the beast hid out in the woods, probably behind the Hall, before heading back south towards its usual haunts around Ennerdale Water. How did it get across the river and the open field to the safety of the woods without being overtaken by the hounds or shot by their masters?

Here, the Derwent meanders alongside an old mediæval road that leads to the Church of St Peter, where lies the effigy of Black Tom, a 15th century Lord of Camerton, known for his smuggling and a Dick Turpin lifestyle. Between river and road is a steep bank. On this day, the bank probably saved the Cumbrian thylacine's life.

Stephen Sleightholme explains that thylacines could swim across rivers and clamber up steep inclines more efficiently than dogs and horses. Cameron R Campbell also believes thylacines could swim well and Nick Mooney adds that Tasmanian devils, the thylacine's closest living relatives, are good swimmers. According to Ronald Gunn, thylacines could also leap 6 to 8ft (1.8-2.4m) in one go. The Ennerdale beast had escaped to fight another day.

THE WILD DOG'S LAST STAND

The Wild Dog of Ennerdale certainly looked and acted like a thylacine. But if a Tasmanian tiger did find itself in the Lake District in 1810, how did it get there?

For as long as people have travelled to faraway places, they've hunted, captured and made use of the animals found there. The Romans brought elephants to their battlefields, and lions, tigers, hyenas and

BOTH PICS: CHRIS COUPLAND

ABOVE LEFT: Camerton Hall. **ABOVE RIGHT:** The river bank where, it is believed, the Wild Dog managed to elude the men and dogs of the Melbreak hunt.

HULTON ARCHIVE / GETTY IMAGES

ABOVE: *Thylacinus cynocephalus* – the thylacine or Tasmanian tiger – in an engraving of 1895. Was this the true identity of the Wild Dog?

crocodiles to their Colosseum. Today's zoos and wildlife parks are full of exotic creatures.

Before zoos came menageries, often appalling spectacles where animals sat in cramped cages to entertain the gawping rich. William the Conqueror had lions, leopards and camels in his menagerie near Oxford, and in 1204 England's King John opened the Royal Menagerie at the Tower of London, where animals were kept until 1832. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the Versailles Menagerie was the talk of France.

Asia, Africa and the Americas: no corner of the world was safe from animal collectors. As far back as 1642, members of Abel Tasman's shore party had written of wild beasts with claws like those of a tiger, and in 1803, the first British settlers arrived in Van Diemans Land. Two years later, William Paterson, the Lieutenant Governor, sent a detailed description of a thylacine for publication in the *Sydney Gazette*. Eleven years earlier, naturalist Jacques Labillardière had reported the first definitive encounter between Western man and this strange antipodean marsupial. By 1810, a thylacine could easily have found itself in a British menagerie. Menagerie expert Professor Vanessa Toulmin, from the University of Sheffield, says that in 1810 there were at least five companies parading their animals around the country, as well as numerous private collections of exotic animals. "Menageries contained elephants, giraffes and lions, so Tasmanian tigers would not have been a problem to catch and keep," she believes. Professor Toulmin adds that everywhere a travelling menagerie went, reports of escaped animals, usually lions, soon followed. Security was actually good, she says, but accidents were not impossible.

Wooden cages with wooden bars can break; wagons in transit can hit an obstacle in the road and overturn. Any captive animal wouldn't need a second invitation to attempt an escape. And once the animal had gone, it would likely be beyond the wit of its captors to find the escapee. John Steel, as Dickinson recorded, arrived at a similar conclusion. He said that people in Cumbria at the time believed the Wild Dog had escaped from a local gipsy troupe.

When protecting their livelihoods, however, humans are more persistent and devastating hunters than any wild beast. However fierce and elusive it might have been, so long as the Wild Dog was killing their sheep, the locals would never cease pursuing it. Dickinson writes, that it was on one such hunt, on 12 September 1810, that a certain Jonathan Patrickson saw the Wild Dog enter a cornfield. With his fellows, Patrickson surrounded the field and when the animal bolted, he shot and wounded it in the hindquarters.

Now the hounds, previously fearful of the beast's powerful jaws, could run it down. The chase lasted over 12 miles (19km), until exhausted, the thylacine stopped to bathe in the River Ehen. Steel himself claims to have been one of the chasing group. Indeed, it was he who is said to have fired the shot that killed the beast, near what was then called Eskat Wood. The eight-stone (50kg) carcass (on average thylacines weighed around five stone (32kg), but there are reports of animals almost twice that size) was then paraded around a nearby village called Ennerdale Bridge. Later, the beast was stuffed and sent to Keswick Museum for display. In the 1950s, a curator of that institution allegedly threw away the moth-eaten specimen, claiming it was nothing more than a "Girt cur dog".

In Dickinson's glossary of Cumbrian dialect, the word 'Girt' strengthens the adjective: 'Bloody great dog'. To 19th century rural folk who'd never heard of, let alone seen, a Tasmanian tiger, that's exactly what the Ennerdale thylacine would have been. FT

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

CRISPIN ANDREWS is a freelance writer from Buckinghamshire who writes about cricket, werewolves and Sherlock Holmes. He has never seen a single episode of reality TV.

OTHER ESCAPED THYLACINES?

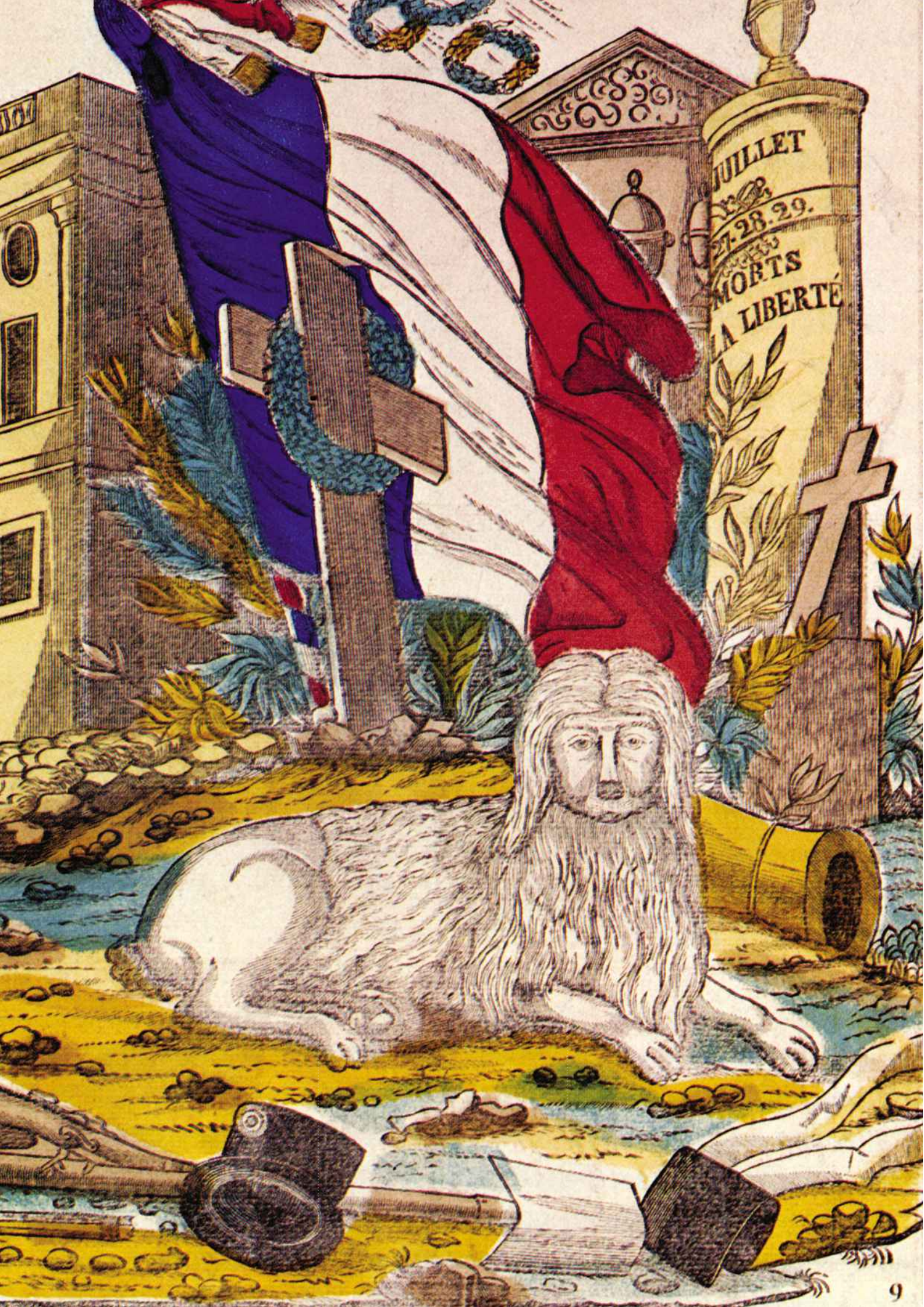
1888, WINSLOW, ARIZONA A frontiersman presents a storekeeper with a fine tawny hide with black stripes, 7ft 3in (2.2m)long, with a long tail. The frontiersman claims to have shot the animal when it attacked him in the mountains. The creature, he says, leapt clear over him with a scream that would have turned the marrow in a dead man's bones. He'd never seen its like before in 13 years. Even the oldest Navajo didn't know what the beast was.

JANUARY–APRIL 1874, COUNTY CAVAN, IRELAND An unknown animal kills 42 sheep, tearing open the throats, sucking the blood, and eating only a tiny amount of flesh. It leaves footprints like a cat's, but with un-retractable claws.

NOVEMBER 1905, BADMINTON, GLOUCESTERSHIRE An animal attacks and kills a number of sheep, sucking their blood and leaving the flesh almost untouched.

1934, SOUTH PITTSBURGH, TENNESSEE A large carnivorous animal kills and partially devours several Alsatian police dogs. Reverend WJ Hancock sees the beast running and leaping across the field like a giant kangaroo.

1995, PUERTO RICO An eyewitness describes an alleged Chupacabras, seen attacking a sheep, as a kangaroo with fangs.


JUILLET
27.28.29.
MORTS
LA LIBERTÉ

CEMETERY DOGS

Greyfriars Bobby is still celebrated as "the most faithful dog in the world", but he was by no means the only canine with a reputation for keeping vigil at his dead master's grave. **JAN BONDESON** looks at the forgotten career of Médor, the Dog of the Louvre, and other once famous cemetery dogs.

With gentle tread, with uncovered head,
Pass by the Louvre gate,
Where buried lie the 'men of July',
And flowers are hung by the passers-by,
And the dog howls desolate.

That dog had fought in the fierce onslaught,
Had rushed with his master on,
And both fought well;
But the master fell,
And behold the surviving one!

Thus begins Ralph Cecil's translation of the French poet Casimir Delavigne's celebrated poem 'Le Chien du Louvre'. In July 1830, the unpopular King Charles X of France was persuaded by his reactionary ministers to change the constitution to the detriment of all but the rich and noble. Since the Parisians of course objected to these measures, there was widespread rioting, with barricades in the streets. The royalist troops were defeated after three days of fierce fighting. Charles X, whose obdurate mind had not been able to appreciate the lesson so harshly taught to his forefathers, namely that an angry Parisian mob is not to be underestimated, had to abdicate, and the Duke of Orléans took over the throne as King Louis Philippe I.

At the fierce fighting near the Louvre, which was of course a royal palace in those days, not a museum, many revolutionaries fell in the hail of royalist bullets. They were buried in a mass grave at the Place du Louvre, surrounded by a low wooden fence, and with a suitable monument. Overjoyed at the dethroning of Charles X and the fall of his unpopular government, the Parisians were inflamed with patriotism. It became popular to visit the resting-place of the 'Heroes of the Louvre', whose blood had been shed to overthrow the tyrant. One day, these Parisians saw that they were not alone. Inside the wooden fence, asleep near the grave, was a large, white and brown, poodle-like dog!

INSIDE THE FENCE, ASLEEP NEAR THE GRAVE, WAS A LARGE WHITE AND BROWN, POODLE-LIKE DOG

FACING PAGE AND LEFT: Médor, the Dog of the Louvre in two contemporary engravings.

By his lifeless clay,
Shaggy and grey,
His fellow-warrior stood;
Nor moved beyond,
But mingled fond
Big tears with his master's blood.

Vigil he keeps
By those green heaps
That tell where heroes lie.
No passer-by
Can attract his eye,
For he knows it is not He!

Everybody realised that this was the Dog of the Nameless Brave, who had come to keep vigil at the grave of his fallen master! As a result, Médor, the Dog of the Louvre, became a national celebrity. The sixth legion of the National Guards built him a comfortable kennel. The Parisians brought him plenty of cakes, bread and sausages, with the result that the half-starved cemetery dog soon developed into a sturdy, well-nourished specimen. Sometimes, people were disappointed to see the Dog of the Louvre sleeping peacefully in his kennel, or waddling around the enclosure looking quite jolly and carefree. Surely, he should be weeping profusely on the grave of the Nameless Brave, and scraping the ground with his feeble paws, as the newspapers and pamphlets had described?

The Francophile German journalist and traveller Ludwig Börne visited Médor, whom he described as a stout-looking white poodle. Médor was the Emperor of Dogs, Börne wrote, the most famous canine inhabitant of Paris, for his heroism in the July revolution. Arriving at the Place du Louvre, Börne could see that Médor had already found his Plutarch: from the peddlers surrounding the fenced cemetery, he purchased a pamphlet on the Dog of the Louvre, a song about his heroism, and the dog's portrait from life. Börne wanted to stroke Médor, but the cemetery dog did not like him, perhaps because it offended the radical political sympathies of the Dog of the Louvre to have anything to do with a well-dressed foreigner.

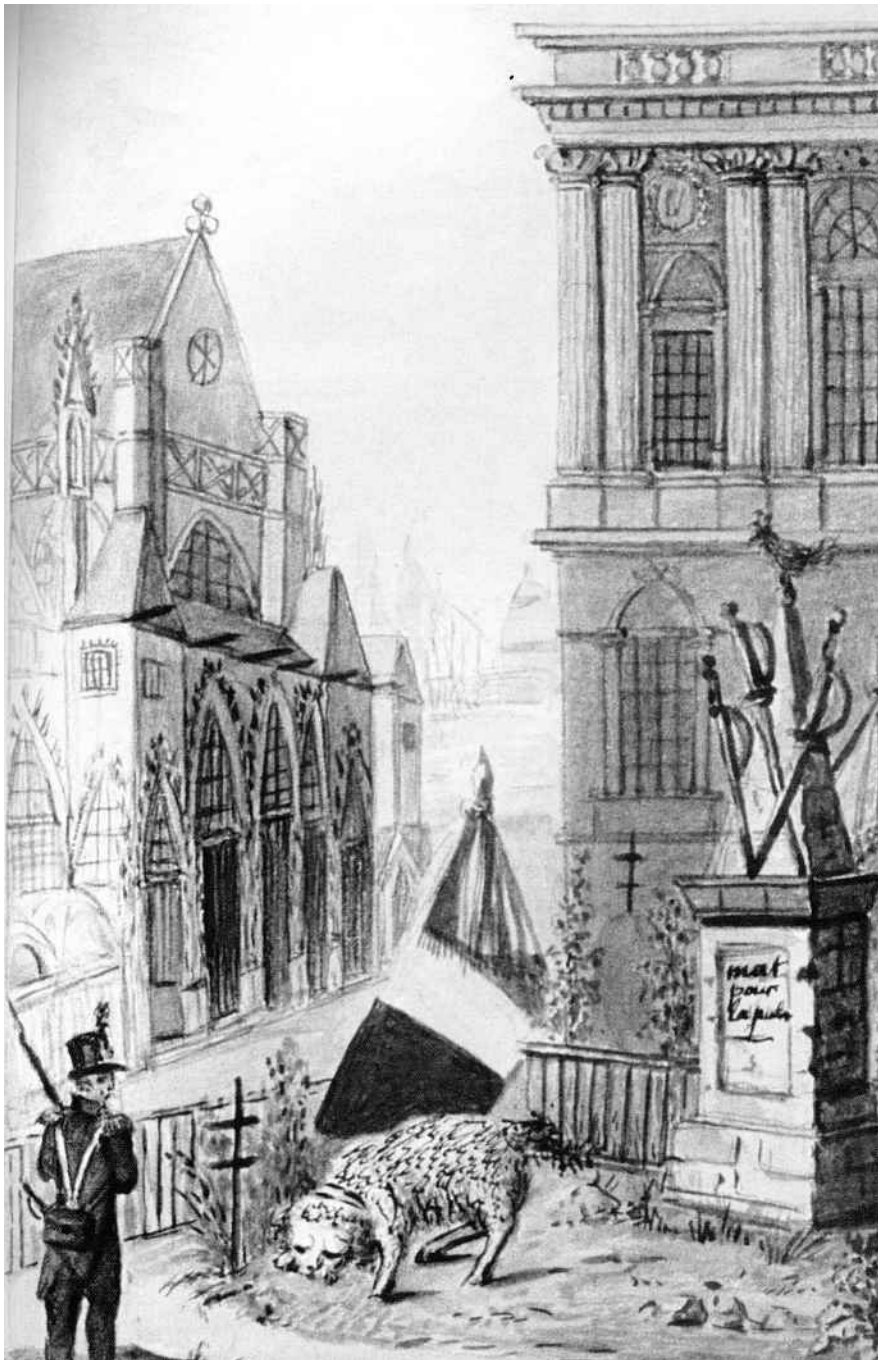
At the dawn, when dew
Wets the garlands new
That are hung in this place of mourning,
He will start to meet
The coming feet
Of him whom he dreamt returning.

On the grave's wood-cross
When the chaplets toss,
By the blast of midnight shaken,
How he howleth! hark!
From that dwelling dark
The slain he would fain awaken.

In late 1830, there was scandal when the cemetery attendant Auguste Marchal reported that an Englishman had tried to bribe her with 200 francs to look the other way while he stole the Dog of the Louvre. Outraged that Médor, the most famous dog in France, might be taken abroad to be exhibited for money, the French authorities had the Englishman arrested. Nine months later, he was still in prison. In the meantime, there was further drama when M. and Mme Martin, who owned a property near Vitri, claimed that Médor belonged to them. When they were reminded that he was the Dog of the Nameless Brave, their response was to drive up to the Louvre in their carriage, grab Médor, and speed away with him.

The feeble cemetery guardians were lambasted for losing the most valuable dog in France; surely, to abduct the mourning dog from the grave of the Nameless Brave was a crime that cried out to Heaven for vengeance! The French authorities again acted with commendable resolution: a search order was issued for the Martin premises in Vitri, a swift dawn raid carried out, and the Dog of the Louvre recovered. When Madame Martin claimed she could find witnesses to testify that Médor was really her dog, she was severely reprimanded and even threatened with prison.

The senior cemetery attendant, Madame Troiedul, was wholly unamused by these shenanigans. She objected that it was very unwise to allow this valuable dog to sleep outdoors in a cemetery. She herself offered to take care of him, and to stand guard at the cemetery gates during daytime to deter dog-thieves. She would also keep Médor in her house at night, where he would be safe from foreign riff-raff with designs to kidnap him abroad. The sentimentalists feared that Médor would become desperate with grief when he was parted from the remains of the Nameless Brave, but the cemetery dog and Madame Troiedul soon became firm friends.



ABOVE: What is probably the best-known engraving of the celebrated 'Chien du Louvre' at the heroes' grave.

SURELY, THE DOG SHOULD BE WEEPING PROFUSELY ON THE GRAVE OF THE NAMELESS BRAVE?

When the snow comes fast
On the chilly blast,
Blanching the bleak church-yard,
With limbs outspread
On the dismal bed
Of his liege, he still keeps guard.

Oft in the night,
With main and might,
He strives to raise the stone;
Short respite takes:
"If master wakes,
He'll call me," then sleeps on.

To prevent Médor being given unsuitable food, or gorging himself on the delicacies provided by his visitors, all the people who wanted to feed the Dog of the Louvre had to apply at Madame Troiedul's house. The forthright Parisian lady was understandably most indignant when another cemetery attendant, jealous of her status as Médor's keeper, accused her of putting the tastiest *tartelets* and *gateaux* aside for her own consumption! She demonstrated the cemetery dog to the National Guards officers to show that he was a very well nourished specimen; in fact, he might burst if he ate everything that was provided for him.

Later, Madame Troiedul was again in trouble after being accused of fiddling the accounts for the sale of pamphlets and prints about Médor. The outcome was that although she was allowed to keep the dog in her house at night, she was ordered to share the daytime care of the Dog of the Louvre with Madame Détot, the official pamphlet-seller, and the *concierge* of the cemetery.

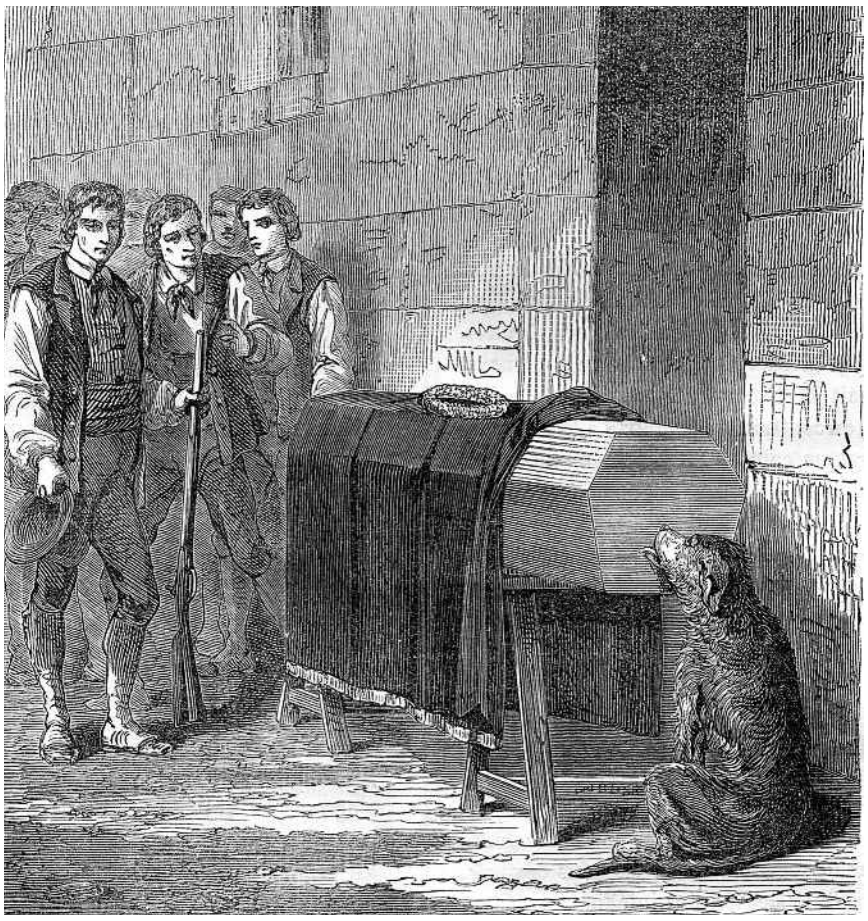
After December 1831, however, there is no further mention of the once famous Dog of the Louvre. Did Médor die at the height of his fame, or did the Parisians finally get fed up with him? Perhaps he ended up as just an ordinary dog, chewing bones, chasing cats, and going for walks with Madame Troiedul. But irrespective of his ultimate fate, the Dog of the Louvre will live forever in Casimir Delavigne's poem:

He'll linger there
In sad despair,
And die on his master's grave.
His name? 'Tis known
To the dead alone –
He's the dog of the nameless brave!

A tear for the dead! for the dog some bread!
Ye who pass the Louvre gate!
Where buried lie the men of July,
And flowers are flung by the passers-by,
And the dog howls desolate.

EARLIER FRENCH CEMETERY DOGS

Médor was not the first French cemetery dog. If you believe the sentimental old French writers of anecdotes about animals, a not insignificant proportion of the dogs of that country were busy mourning on their deceased masters' graves. When Marseille was struck by the plague in 1720, an entire family was wiped out: the father, mother, two



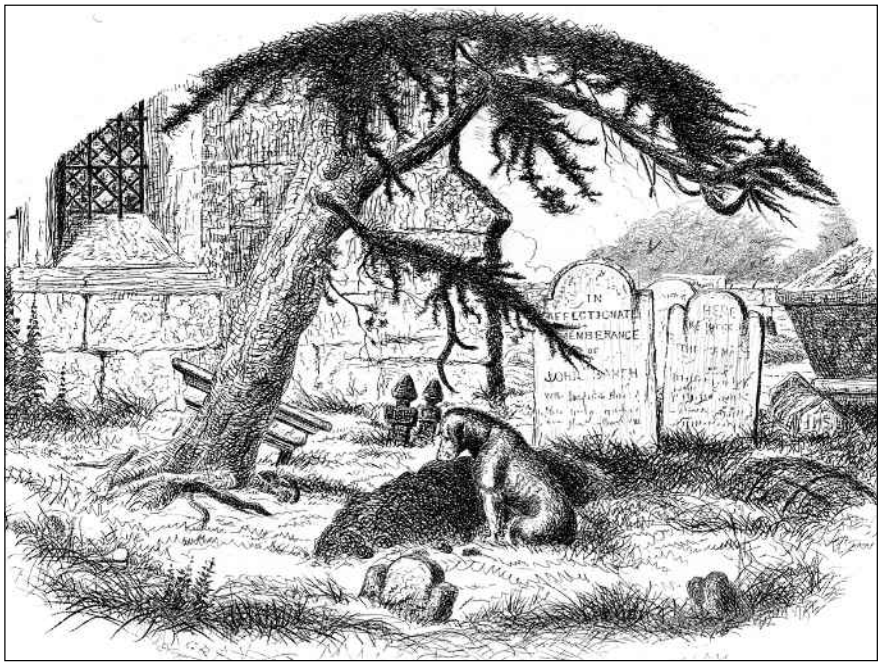
TOP AND ABOVE: French dogs mourn their masters, from Emile Richebourg's *Histoire des Chiens Célèbres*.

grown-up daughters and three young sons. The only survivor was a *Barbet*, or French water dog. Although given another home, the grieving dog refused to stay there: he kept vigil at the tombs of the family, preferring that of the seven-year-old son, who had always been very good to the dog. 'Le Chien des Tombeaux' lamented without cease, one writer claimed, and he tried to dig with his frail paws to rejoin his young master in the grave. The cemetery dog kept vigil night and day for seven years, and could only be persuaded to eat with the greatest difficulty. The dog became a local celebrity for his devotion and, on Sundays and holidays, people came to see and feed him. They used to contrast the faithful dog with the greedy heirs who were only too keen to see their *tante d'heritance* put into the cemetery. Mothers used to bring their children to see the cemetery dog, and exclaim "Mes enfants, admirez le Chien des Tombeaux, et ne l'oubliez jamais!"

At about the same time the Marseille cemetery dog held court, a young Montpellier student named Renaudin expired in a hunting accident. The student had a faithful wolfhound that was very fond of him. When Renaudin's body was brought to his lodgings, the dog mourned him intensely, wailing and howling with grief. When the student's body was put in a coffin, the dog wanted to share it with him. At the funeral, the dog was the chief mourner, and a few days later, the other students could see it keeping vigil at Renaudin's tomb. They made the dog a comfortable kennel and kept it well fed. During its five-year vigil, the dog was never more than 20 steps away from Renaudin's tomb. It is recorded that the other dogs of Montpellier often came to visit the wolfhound in its snug kennel, to try to cheer the gloomy old cemetery dog up.

In January 1799, a student named Beaumanoir wanted to cross the frozen Seine, but the ice was too thin and he drowned. His little dog, which had seen him struggle in the water, kept vigil on the ice. When a soldier tried to carry the dog off, he was bitten by the faithful animal; enraged by this ingratitude, the soldier shot the dog with his rifle. In one version of this yarn, the dog dies and is thrown onto a pile of refuse, whereas the soldier lives happily ever after; in another, the soldier dies from the infected dog bite, and the dog is nursed back to health by a kindly old woman. A cartoon depicted the mournful-looking dog sitting near the hole in the ice, next to its master's tall hat, with the caption: "He is always waiting".

The Dog of the Louvre had many successors in the 19th-century Francophonic world, where some very queer notions of excessive canine fidelity flourished among well-to-do *bourgeois* dog-lovers. Press stories of cemetery dogs abounded, many of them obvious newspaper *canards*. In 1874, the *Société Protectrice des Animaux* faced a crisis when the Paris cemetery authorities issued an edict excluding dogs from the grounds. The appropriately named M. Cheval, a member of the governing council of the *Société*, was worried that it would have very harmful consequences for the cemetery



A FAITHFUL FRIEND. (*See p.* 334.)

TOP: A dog keeping vigil on its master's grave, from George R Jesse's *Researches into the History of the British Dog*. **ABOVE:** The sad-looking cemetery dog of St Margaret's Church, Lee, from *Little Folks* magazine.

dogs to be banned from mourning their dead masters. He knew for a fact that many dogs visited the great Paris cemeteries daily to mourn their dear departed; there was an increase in their number on All Soul's Day. He claimed that he had himself several times seen a dog prostrate with grief on its master's tomb in the Cayenne cemetery, Quartier Clignancourt.

When a celebrated Paris cemetery dog, 'Le Chien de Montparnasse', was forced to interrupt its vigil on its master's grave by this novel legislation, the *Société* decided to act resolutely to save the poor mourning animal. This dog, which had been repudiated by the relatives inheriting its master's estate, used to spend much time mourning him in the Montparnasse cemetery. When M. Cheval and the other officials of the *Société* arrived at the cemetery, the dog stood outside its gates, howling piteously. M. Cheval explained to the verger that this was a proper cemetery dog, with a very sensitive nervous system; it would certainly die from a broken heart if excluded any longer. When the dog was let in by the apologetic verger, it ran straight to the grave of its master, where "le gardien-chef" of the Montparnasse cemetery kept it well fed and cared for. Another tender-hearted Frenchman, M. Humbert, suggested that Paris should have a home for cemetery dogs, where the poor animals could be well looked after and accompanied to the graves of their masters by an attendant.

CEMETERY DOGS IN THE UK AND US

Although France was the centre of cemetery dog lore, the 'Dog on the Master's Grave' was a pan-European legend of canine fidelity. There were cemetery dogs in all parts of the British Isles. The old dog author Joseph Taylor, writing in 1804, knew of a dog that had been bemoaning the loss of its beloved master for 11 years, living in a cavern at St Olave's cemetery, Southwark. The dog was fed regularly, and pointed out as "a striking example of the faithfulness and gratitude of a poor Dog, whose fidelity is not to be shaken, even though his departed master is no more." In 1827, a dog was constantly to be seen in St Bride's Churchyard in Fleet Street. This dog had, for two years, refused to leave its master's grave. People were a little disappointed that the dog did not look at all miserable. The inhabitants of the houses round the church fed the faithful dog daily, and the sexton provided him with a kennel. No person knew the identity of the masters of either of these two cemetery dogs.

ABOVE: An 1884 engraving of Landseer's *The Poor Dog*, by G Sidney Hunt. This painting was probably inspired by one of the cemetery dog stories doing the rounds of the press. **BELOW:** The statue of US cemetery dog Rollo.

WHEN ROLLO DIED, A MARBLE STATUE WAS SUBSCRIBED TO BY THE KIND, DOG-LOVING LOCALS

In the 1830s, there was a 'Dog on the Master's Grave', presumed to have belonged to an Italian, in the cemetery of the Catholic Chapel in Scotland Road, Liverpool. Every day, this dog went to the Throstle Nest tavern nearby to be provided with a meal. The cemetery dog slept in the tavern, but each morning he set out to mourn his master, or so at least it was presumed. Another faithful old dog lived in the cemetery of St Margaret's Church, Lee, not far from London. After spending 18 months mourning at his unknown master's grave, he was given a collar with the inscription "The Little Wonder, of Saint Margaret's Church, Lee".

Nor did the 'Dog on the Master's Grave' legend fail to cross the Atlantic. In Rose Hill Cemetery, the oldest public cemetery in Washington County, is the stone statue of the dog Rollo, who kept vigil on his unknown master's grave for several years. The cemetery opened in 1865 and the dog statue is said to be nearly as old as that. People living near the cemetery tried to entice Rollo away from the grave, but without success; they instead provided the mourning canine with food, water and shelter in cold weather. When Rollo died, a marble statue was subscribed to by the kind, dog-loving locals. Although the name of the dog owner is long since forgotten, the head of Rollo's statue is worn smooth by thousands of sentimental visitors patting him on the head; nor does the grave ever lack fresh flowers, usually yellow roses.

Sometimes the cemetery dogs fared badly when exposed to a more critical age. In 1930, Mrs Elizabeth Smith of Buffalo was buried at Pine Hill Cemetery. The day after, workmen were surprised to see a black collie dog lying disconsolately near the grave, howling

dismally. Many people went to admire the devoted dog, and bring it food. The American SPCA took the dog away to their pound, where it was seen by Mrs Smith's flabbergasted relatives; they had never seen the 'faithful mourner' before, and Mrs Smith had never owned a dog! But the dog's newspaper photograph was seen by another Buffalo citizen, who had lost his fine collie Rex a few days earlier. When he arrived at the pound, Rex jumped up, yelping with delight. Since the dog had never even seen Mrs Smith, his alleged 'faithful mourning' had just been sentimental misinterpretation from the cemetery workmen.

There were American newspaper stories of cemetery dogs from 1909, 1922, 1932 and 1954 (two). In one of the 1954 yarns, there was consternation when it turned out that the mongrel Brownie, presumed to have travelled 16 miles (26km) to keep vigil on the grave of his only real friend, his seven-year-old master, had selected the grave of a pensioner by mistake. In the other one, a stray dog had appeared after a funeral in a cemetery in Hartford, Connecticut. The local people presumed it had come to mourn its departed master, but again it turned out that the dog was 'keeping vigil' on the grave of a perfect stranger, and enjoying a comfortable life as a cemetery dog.

A SENTIMENTAL MYTH

The first incarnation of the cemetery dog was actually a suicidal dog, supposed to lose its will to live after its master's death. But in the 17th century, the perception of the cemetery dog changed: these gloomy animals instead preferred to keep vigil on tombs, waiting faithfully for their masters to return. Many of these dogs were well taken care of and lived for many years, becoming local celebrities in the process. People pointed them out as models of virtue, and travelled long distances to see and admire them. Showing no intention whatsoever of pining to death, these dogs appear to have led quite happy, independent lives. Dogs are by nature territorial animals, and it would make sense for the cemetery dog to remain within the enclosed space where it had been so very kindly treated and well fed by its benefactors.

Modern research on dog behaviour would suggest that dogs are perfectly capable of grieving for a dead or departed human or nonhuman animal with whom the dog has bonded. There are also several verified instances of dogs remaining with their dead masters for some considerable time, after the master has met with some lethal accident or disease when travelling in a desolate area. In contrast, it is not logical behaviour for a dog to linger round, or rest upon, its dead master's grave. Firstly, a dog has no clear concept of death, or the ability to connect the once-living master with the lifeless flesh being buried in the coffin. Secondly, one of the primary instincts of a healthy dog is that of self-preservation; it would make no sense for the dog to pine to death lying on the master's grave rather than getting on with life.

The legend of the 'Dog on the Master's Grave' can be found all over the world, in many different versions. It seems to have been a very appealing idea to the Victorians that dogs were capable of such intense affection, with the smug extension that the humans themselves were the deserving recipients of such sterling loyalty. It would appear that this sentimental reasoning was taken advantage of by some canine adventurers: stray dogs who took up residence in suitable cemeteries, where the dismal, half-starved animals were surprised to find themselves well looked after by kind, dog-loving people who presumed they were keeping vigil on the graves of their masters. In Paris, the Dog of the Innocents and the Dog of the Louvre were seen and fed by many people, as were the cemetery dogs of London, Liverpool and Newcastle. It is telling that in a more critical age, the cemetery dogs were often exposed as unconscious impostors: they had nothing whatsoever to do with the persons on whose graves they were supposed to be keeping vigil, and their perceived 'faithful mourning' was just sentimental misinterpretation.

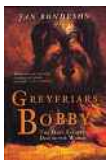
ABOVE: A newspaper drawing from life of Greyfriars Bobby, still the most famous of all cemetery dogs.

THE TRIUMPH OF BOBBY

As we have seen, cemetery dogs were far from uncommon in Victorian times. So why is Greyfriars Bobby (see **FT297:44-51**) today a world-famous cultural icon, whereas the others have been forgotten; why has Edinburgh's canine saint not been demoted to become just one of about 40 Victorian cemetery dogs? It is a contributing factor that Bobby kept a high profile in the media during his lifetime, but this has not saved the even more widely publicised Médor, the Dog of the Louvre, from obscurity. Importantly, Greyfriars Bobby's career as a celebrity, and his beatification after death, coincided with a time when the awareness of animal rights was increasing. For the growing animal protection movement, Bobby became a symbol of canine fidelity, and he helped the lot of countless other dogs through the legend that had been founded about his faithful mourning. Many a Victorian youngster must have had their view of the emotional lives of dogs permanently changed after hearing some unctuous RSPCA lecturer retell the pathetic story of Bobby's long vigil, the poor dog shivering on the grave of his master in sleet and snow.

The role of Greyfriars Bobby's monument in perpetuating his memory cannot be overestimated. Because of the quaint Candlemaker Row drinking fountain, Bobby's story was remembered in Edinburgh and elsewhere, and told and re-told in newspapers all over the world. This led to Eleanor Atkinson writing her novel about Edinburgh's famous dog, and the later exploitation of the story by Walt Disney and others, making Bobby a cultural icon. Greyfriars Bobby has become a canine saint, revered for his devotion and fidelity. The books and films about him are still popular, and he has launched a thousand school projects from Inverness to Chittagong. His value for the Edinburgh tourist industry must be considerable indeed. Like some bizarre four-legged anchorite, he still sits motionless on top of his monument, to receive homage from the wide-eyed tourists and their flashing cameras. We are all but mere mortals, dogs and humans alike, but the legend of Greyfriars Bobby, the most faithful dog in the world, will live forever.

But as we have seen, Greyfriars Bobby's story is the most prominent variant of an ancient and widespread myth of canine loyalty. There is much to be said for the hypothesis that Bobby was an unconscious impostor, who made use of the 'Dog on the Master's Grave' legend to improve his lot in life. FT



This is an edited extract from Jan Bondeson's book *Greyfriars Bobby, the Most Faithful Dog in the World*, just published in paperback by Amberley Publishing, £10.99

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

JAN BONDESON is a senior lecturer and consultant rheumatologist at Cardiff University. He is the author of numerous books, including *Amazing Dogs* and *Queen Victoria's Stalker,* and a regular contributor to *Fortean Times*.

MAGBOOK

The Independent Guide to the

iPad mini

ONLY £8.99

ON SALE NOW!

For more great titles visit www.magbooks.com

FortеanTimes | SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

FREE FortеanTimes T-shirt and Paranormal Handbook when you claim 3 trial issues

YOUR EXCLUSIVE FREE GIFTS

Your Phenomenal Offer:

- **3 trial issues** to start your subscription – if you're not completely satisfied, simply cancel during your trial period and claim a FULL REFUND
- **FREE** *Fortean Times* T-shirt and Paranormal Handbook
- **SAVE up to 21%** on the shop price if you continue your subscription
- **FREE delivery to your door** before it hits the shops

Order online: using offer code below
www.dennismags.co.uk/forteantimes

Order by phone:
0844 844 0049
or complete and return the form below

FortеanTimes 3 TRIAL ISSUES ORDER FORM

IMPORTANT
Please select the size of your FREE T-shirt ☐ SMALL ☐ MEDIUM ☐ LARGE

☐ **YES! Please start my subscription to Fortean Times with 3 trial issues and send me my FREE *Fortean Times* T-shirt and Paranormal Handbook.**
I understand that the first 3 issues of *Fortean Times* I receive are on a no obligation trial basis. If I'm not completely satisfied, I can write to cancel during my trial period and claim a FULL REFUND. The trial issues and FREE *Fortean Times* T-shirt and Paranormal Handbook are mine to keep, whatever I decide.

OR ☐ I am an existing subscriber. Please extend my subscription with this offer.

YOUR DETAILS:

Mr/Mrs/Ms Forename

Surname

Address

Postcode

Telephone

Mobile

Email Year of birth

CHEQUE & CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS: £39.98 FOR 12 ISSUES (SAVE 21%)

1 ☐ I enclose a cheque made payable to Dennis Publishing Ltd.

2 ☐ Please charge my: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ AMEX ☐ Debit/Maestro (issue no. ☐)

CARD NUMBER START DATE EXPIRY DATE

SIGNED TODAY'S DATE

DIRECT DEBIT PAYMENT: £19.99 every 6 issues (SAVE 21%) – UK ONLY

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit — DIRECT Debit

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To the manager: Bank name

Address

Postcode

Originator's Identification Number

7	2	4	6	8	0

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society
Please pay Dennis Publishing Ltd. Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Dennis Publishing Ltd. and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Account in the name(s) of

Branch sort code

Bank/Building Society account number

Signature(s)

Date

Banks and building societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account

Dennis Publishing (UK) Ltd uses a layered Privacy Notice, giving you brief details about how we would like to use your personal information. For full details please visit our website **www.dennis.co.uk/privacy/** or call us on **0844 844 0053**. If you have any questions please ask as submitting your details indicates your consent, until you choose otherwise, that we and our partners may contact you about products and services that will be of relevance to you via, direct mail, phone, email and SMS. You can opt-out at ANY time via **www.subsinfo.co.uk** or **privacy@dennis.co.uk** or **0844 844 0053**.

Gifts limited to first 100 orders. Please allow 28 days for delivery. UK only.
This offer is limited to one offer per household

Return this order to: Freepost RLZS-ETGT-BCZR, Fortean Times, 800 Guillat Avenue, Kent Science Park, Sittingbourne ME9 8GU (NO STAMP REQUIRED)

OFFER CODE: P1303

HAVE YOUR SAY

forum

The end of a fishy tale

ALISON RUTTER and **GORDON RUTTER** find that a celebrated 200-year-old mermaid sighting can finally be buried at sea...

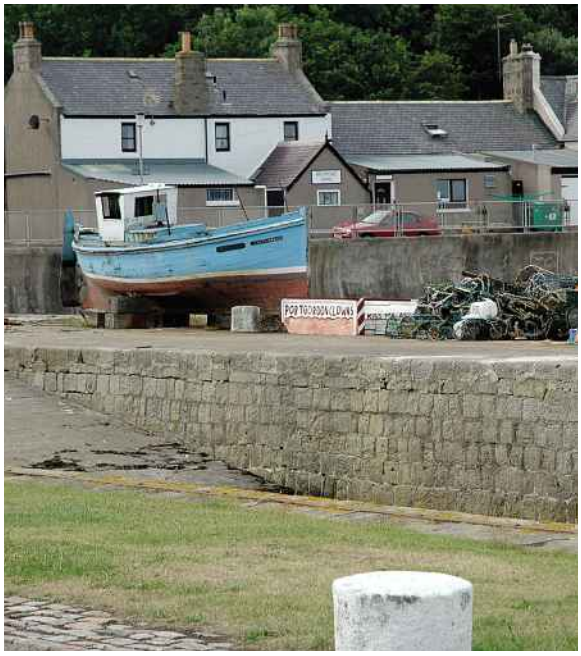
ALISON AND GORDON RUTTER met at the Edinburgh Fortean Society and the proposal for the wedding took place at UnConvention, so it seems only logical they should write an article together.

One of the more famous accounts of a mermaid sighting has to be the early 19th century Portgordon Merman. The details of this sighting can be found in several books on mermaids, but one of the first was *Primitive Belief in the North East of Scotland* by J M McPherson, first published in 1929. It would seem that this is the source that most subsequent authors have used. The original source, however – provided helpfully by McPherson – is a letter sent to the *Aberdeen Chronicle*, published on 20 August 1814. It was sent by George McKenzie, schoolmaster of Raffan, and related to an event from 15 August.

So, what is the story of the Portgordon Merman?

Portgordon is in the county of Moray (Banffshire as it was at the time), in the north-east of Scotland, some 50 miles (80km) east of Inverness. Formerly a fishing community, Portgordon was the last village to get electricity in Scotland and is still known locally as "Paraffin City".

George McKenzie was not the witness to the merman, he merely passed on the account from two fishermen (Thomas Johnston and William Gordon) whom he believed "to be of undoubted veracity, and respectable enough in their station of life". Returning from a fishing trip at 3 or 4 o' clock (so the light would be good) on a flat, calm sea, Johnston and Gordon were still a quarter of a mile (400m) from the shore when they saw "at a small distance from their boat, with its back towards them and half its body above the water, a Creature of a tawney (sic) colour, appearing like a man sitting with his body somewhat bent". They were able to approach more closely, at which point it became aware of their presence and it turned around, giving them a better view. "His countenance was swarthy, his hair short and curled of a colour between a green and a grey; he had small eyes, a flat nose, his mouth was large and his arms of an extraordinary length. Above the waist he was shaped like a man… from the waist downwards, his body tapered considerably… like a large fish without scales". This close observation was obviously too much for the merman, which dived under the water only to reappear a few seconds later a little further away. But this time he was accompanied by a female of the species: the breasts were visible and she had longer hair and fairer skin. At this point, Johnston and Gordon panicked and rowed back to the shore, although they could see the watery couple watching them as they left. Upon arriving at Portgordon they sought out George McKenzie and told their story to him.



GORDON RUTTER

ABOVE: Portgordon, a typical fishing community at the time of the 1814 merman report.

The merman turned around, giving them a better view

And that's the tale that has remained essentially unquestioned for the last 200 years.

One of us (Alison) is originally from Portgordon, and being intrigued by the story we started a little investigation. Finding the McPherson account was easy, and a bit of time with a microfiche reader soon yielded the original letter in the *Aberdeen Chronicle*. So we had the original source material – always a good place to start. Obviously, interviews with the named individuals were out of the question. But was there any other evidence? A sighting like this would surely create ripples (sorry!) in the local area. There would be discussion and possibly corroborating sightings. The first area to check was where it was first reported – the *Aberdeen Chronicle*. And we found a little nugget. A fortnight after the original letter, 3 September 1814, there was another letter from Portgordon, this time from a Mr John Watt. Presumably a friend of McKenzie, or the two fishermen, or perhaps even an independent witness of the events previously related.

But no, as we read Watt's letter we realised that we'd all been hoodwinked!

Watt, a regular and happy reader of the *Chronicle*, says he had "seldom met with anything that displeased him until last week, when I was much surprised to find a letter signed by one who had the impudence to style himself Schoolmaster of Raffan, and purporting two Mermaids to have been seen". He then goes on to inform us that the Raffan schoolmaster is actually a Mr Copland and the two fishermen are unknown in Portgordon. And no one there had heard even an inkling of any mermaid sightings until the paper had arrived! In short, Watt was adamant the whole thing was a hoax. The editor agreed with him, and immediately after Watt's letter there appeared an editor's apology and retraction of the story.

So, a 200-year-old mermaid sighting can finally be laid to rest as the hoax it appears to have been. FT

The Imaginal College

SIMON WILSON looks back to his university days and wonders whether there was more to the humdrum St Catherine's College, Cambridge, than met the eye

SIMON WILSON is a writer, researcher and English teacher. He is a frequent contributor to *Fortean Times* and has recently relocated from Munich, Germany, to Canterbury, Kent.

I had long been attracted by the romance of venerable buildings. It was the beauty of the colleges which led me to try for a place at Cambridge University, a long shot for a comprehensive-educated lad from an obscure northern town. I had in mind the Gothic splendour of King's College Chapel, but was advised to apply to the college next to King's, the comparatively dowdy St Catharine's.

My romantic student's soul took little pleasure in the dour Main Court of this relatively impoverished college, and it was small consolation to learn that I was not the first to feel that way. In 1654, for instance, the diarist John Evelyn had described St Catharine's as a "meane structure." [1] More recently, Malcolm Lowry, the author of *Under the Volcano* (1947) and the college's most distinguished literary alumnus, had likened its buildings to barracks and its dining hall to a mortuary. [2]

When I looked more closely into the history of the college, however, strange and intriguing things came to light – intimations of secrets and mystical knowledge. Somehow they seemed to be connected to the arms of the college, which show a golden Catherine wheel against a red background (in the language of heraldry, 'Gules a Catherine wheel Or') [3] Together, the mysterious history and the Catherine wheel hinted at a veiled and esoteric tradition and a college which at last fired my imagination.

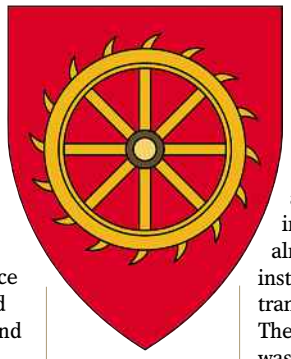
It was, of course, possible that this transfigured college had never existed beyond my imagination, but at times it seemed the revelation of a truth, of a college that was *real* – just not real in the same way that the brick-and-mortar, material college was (although they overlapped). Perhaps I glimpsed the St Catharine's of what Henry Corbin had called the imaginal world, a realm intermediate "between the intellectual and the sensible," which is seen in visionary moments. [4] The imaginal world is real, but its reality is of a different order to the material world around us.

St Catharine's was founded in 1473 by Robert Woodlark "ad gloriam et laudem Dei et stabilimentum fidei" ("for the glory and praise of God and the stability of the faith"). [5] In the preamble to its statutes he stated that he had established the college "in the exaltation of the Christian faith and the defence and furtherance of the holy Church by the sowing and administration of the word of God, and in the increase of the disciplines of philosophy and theology." [6] The 12th college to be founded in Cambridge, it was uncommonly small, consisting only of the Master and a few fellows, who were not allowed to study any subjects other than theology and philosophy. No provision was made for undergraduates. [7] St Catharine's, as founded, resembled a strictly monastic institution.

Even in 1473 such restrictions were fairly unusual. The other Cambridge colleges were increasingly becoming teaching institutions, with canon and civil law as well as, to a lesser extent, medicine firmly established on the syllabus. Woodlark was aware of this, having previously been Provost (i.e. Master) of King's, where no such restrictions existed.

The scholarly world in general was undergoing radical change. As a consequence of the fall of Byzantium in 1453, many ancient manuscripts had reached Western Europe, transforming philosophy and making an invaluable contribution to the Renaissance. In 1463, Marsilio Ficino translated the *Corpus Hermeticum*, which would have an enormous influence on philosophical and esoteric thought. Humanism was rapidly gaining ground: it was only a few years after Woodlark's foundation that Erasmus visited England for the first time, going on to become Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge in 1511. Early intimations of the Reformation were already apparent. John Wycliffe, for instance, had produced an English translation of the Bible in the 1380s. The first book printed in English was published by William Caxton in 1474, the year after St Catharine's was founded, and the invention of moveable type was to facilitate the wider availability of the Bible in the vernacular. Outside the scholarly halls, the reforming ideals of the Lollards, although no longer the force they had been earlier in the century, still had a significant presence amongst the poorer members of society.

Woodlark's small, unobtrusive college, it seemed to me, was intended as a secret bulwark against change. St Catharine's was to defend an ancient and venerable tradition against the



ABOVE: The arms of St Catherine's: "Gules a Catherine wheel Or".

BELOW: A view of the college's "dour main court".

HOLLY HAYES / CREATIVE COMMONS

LEFT: The figure of Saint Catherine holding the wheel; but what does its symbolism mean for the college named after her?

reforms of the Renaissance, which threatened the integrity and harmony of faith, as Woodlark conceived of it. It would fulfil that function, however, not by inculcating particular views and attitudes in undergraduates, for it had none. Rather, it would constitute a discreet centre of spiritual resistance in a world awash with new ideas. The quiet study, worship and prayer of the Master and fellows, if they had an influence on the world at large at all, would have worked by a kind of high magic, radiating their healing powers outwards into a country where, very soon, the Church was to face catastrophe. More practically, fellows would every so often leave the college to take up their own livings as priests or to join other colleges, taking their learning and prayer-life with them.

The dedication of this spiritual centre to St Catharine of Alexandria was, on the surface of it, nothing out of the ordinary: she was, after all, the patron saint of theologians, philosophers and scholars. If we look a little deeper, however, Woodlark's choice of this particular saint can further illuminate our understanding of his vision. Significantly, St Catharine was venerated for defending, with intelligence and passion, the true – that is, Christian – faith against attack. According to the legend, she had reproached the Emperor Maxentius in the fourth century for persecuting Christians and worshipping false gods. Disputing with the Emperor's greatest scholars and philosophers, she was able to refute their arguments, with the consequence that many of them converted to her faith on the spot.

They hinted at a veiled and esoteric tradition

Clearly, this story would have spoken directly to Robert Woodlark's heart. St Catharine, in her defence of the true faith against hostile and undermining powers, was the perfect model for the college which bears her name.

The arms of the college show the wheel on which Maxentius intended to execute the saint after her victory over his wise men. The instrument of torture, however, broke at her touch, and the Emperor then had to resort to having her beheaded.

A wheel, of course, is of complex and contradictory symbolism. The wheel destroyed by divine intervention can be understood as the relentless and unstoppable wheel of fortune, the wheel of time and of the law, on which we are bound forever, and which slowly but surely tears us apart if we let it. Maxentius, in this view, embodies all the forces of the world which are determined to press us onto this wheel by denying the existence of anything beyond the endless turning of the material world and its seasons, or beyond the impersonal reign of fate. St Catharine's faith, however, shatters this wheel, and she is free.

This begs the question, however, of why Woodlark didn't choose the shattered wheel for his college's arms. That would certainly have been possible: Christian iconography frequently uses the broken Catherine wheel as a motif, and, indeed, a window by the entrance to the college's chapel shows the saint standing next to such a wheel. A coat of arms with the broken wheel would have stressed more obviously the victory of true faith over fate and the world.

One answer to the question is that the college's coat of arms represents a different aspect of wheel symbolism, namely that of the transcendent realm of the divine and the spirit. As such, like the Jungian mandala, the arms also symbolise wholeness and order. The college's Catherine wheel, then, is the wheel of spiritual harmony which defeats and replaces the wheel of the law and the cycles of the material world. In other words, it celebrates the triumph of the centripetal forces which lead to the true spiritual centre of one's being over the centrifugal forces which lead to the fragmentation of one's self in the world of matter.

The arms represent Woodlark's vision of the college's mystical role as defender and maintainer of the integrity of the true faith in a world in which it was threatened by schism and by the march of humanism. The few fellows were not there to educate others but to steep themselves in Christian spiritual practice, to free themselves of the depredations of the world. Their return to their centre was essentially a process of purification, of cleansing from the stain of the *spiritus mundi*, a process also indicated by the college's patron saint, whose name comes from the Greek 'katharos' – pure. The St Catharine's men, as I saw them, pursued scholarship as catharsis.

This vision of a secretive, mystical centre countering fragmentation, materialism and the forces of secularism spoke to my romantic heart. The St Catharine's it conjured up may have been destroyed by the Reformation, but it could still be perceived, shimmering on the brink of visibility just behind the disappointing walls of the physical college. FT

NOTES

1 EE Rich (ed.): *St Catharine's College Cambridge 1473-1973: A Volume of Essays to Commemorate the Quincentenary of the Foundation of the College*, p59.

2 Gordon Bowker: *Pursued by Furies: A Life of Malcolm Lowry* (Flamingo, London, 1994), p115.

3 WHS Jones: *A History of St Catharine's College Once Catharine Hall Cambridge* (CUP, Cambridge, 1936), p47.

4 Henry Corbin: *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth: From Mazdean Iran to Shi'ite Iran* (Princeton UP, Princeton, 1989), pxviii.

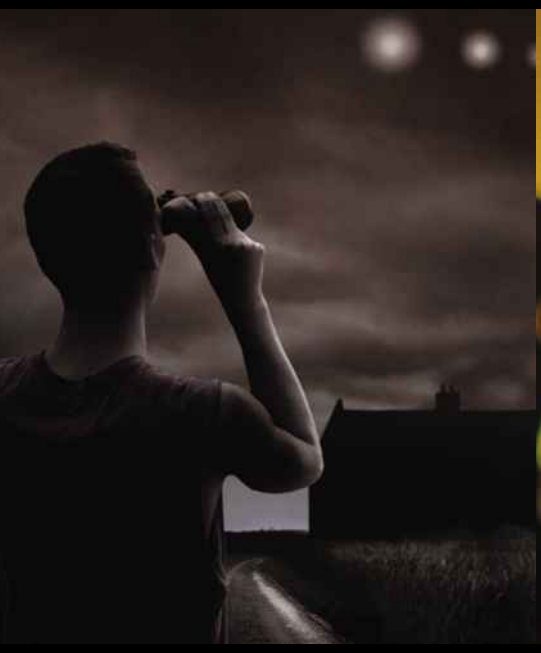
5 Rich, p10.

6 Rich, pp10-11.

7 Rich, pp20-21.

SCARED OF THE DARK ?

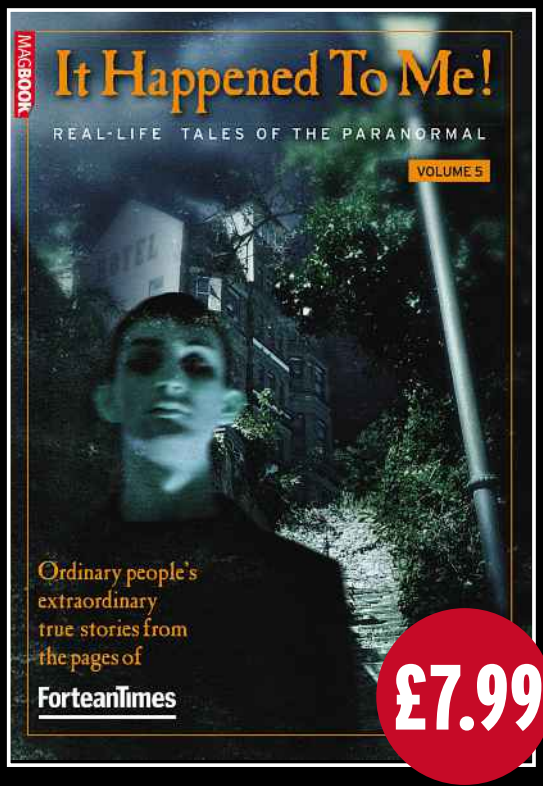
YOU WILL BE !



The UFO that emerged from a Norfolk lake...

The dog-headed men terrorising the North of England...

The weird old lady who haunted a staircase...



IT HAPPENED TO ME VOLUME 5

FortеanTimes

presents more true-life encounters with the unexplained

TO ORDER DIRECT CALL 0844 844 0053 OR VISIT MAGBOOKS.COM FOR PRINT AND DIGITAL EDITIONS

ALSO AVAILABLE TO PURCHASE FROM

amazon.co.uk WHSmith

NOW ALSO AVAILABLE ON AMAZON KINDLE STORE

This month's books, films and games

reviews

Together in life and death...

The original Siamese twins' conjoinment becomes a metaphor for an examination of 'normal' personhood, kinship, disability, race – and an unusual legal conundrum

Chang and Eng Reconnected

Cynthia Wu

Temple University Press 2012

Pb, 218pp, illus, notes, ind, £18.99, ISBN 9781439908693

FORTEAN TIMES BOOKSHOP PRICE £18.99

Historically, conjoined twins had been known and studied for centuries before the fame of Chang and Eng established the phrase 'Siamese twins'. In fact they were first known as the 'Chinese twins', born in Siam (today's Thailand) in 1811, to a Chinese father and a mother who was half-Chinese and half-Malay. They were brought to America in 1929 and embarked on a profitable tour that included Britain and Europe. After a dispute with their manager, they continued touring with PT Barnum until 1839. At that time, aged 28, they became US citizens and settled in Mount Airy, North Carolina, becoming successful businessmen and farmers. In 1844, for legal convenience, they adopted the surname Bunker (no one seems to know why).

In their 33rd year, they married sisters Adelaide and Sarah Ann Yates. Eng fathered six boys and five girls, and Chang seven girls and three boys. All their children were normal apart from a son and daughter of Chang, who were deaf-mutes. The twins died within hours of each other in January 1874, aged 63. Today, their descendants number more than 1,500 and include several sets of (non-conjoined) twins. These descendents have included a senior military officer, a candidate for governor of Florida (in 2010), a railroad president, and a leading geologist. The extended family still holds annual reunions; the latest, in July 2012, was the 22nd gathering held on the 200th birthday of the twin brothers.

So much for the basic story. Wu, a professor of American Studies at the University of Buffalo, has steered her book in a completely different direction from the usual accounts of Chang and Eng, away from the sideshow fascination about disability and also the mechanics of joined twins marrying sisters and fathering 21 children. Nor is this a biography; it is an analysis of society's response to abnormality.

Here, the conjoinment becomes a useful metaphor for examining social contradictions about what are 'normal' personhood, kinship, social acceptance, political representation and even national unity. Chang and Eng Bunker were neither black nor white, but became socially acceptable as something intermediate that bridged the racial divide. Wu begins her study with an analysis of the status of Asians in early 19th century America against the background of violent and entrenched racial attitudes. Social studies have shown that the gap between Asian Americans and Whites was smaller than that between African Americans and Whites. Even so, the townsfolk of Mount Airy were apparently more exercised about the racial differences between the twins and their fiancées than they were about the twins' disability.

Yet they remained a 'mysterious unity'– two yet one. In later life they had their differences – so did their wife-sisters – so that they bought separate homes and alternated three days in each, during which the 'visiting' twin and his wife became subordinate to their counterparts. They were widely respected for their scrupulous fairness in business matters. Yet they also owned slaves – as many did at that time. Chang is on record as selling 10 of them to his brother.

> **"Were the twins one entity or two? Was an agreement by one binding on the other?"**

According to the understanding of the day, there was much debate about the Bunkers' offspring. In kinship terms, the children were double first cousins. Genetically, because Chang and Eng were identical twins, their children were genetically equivalent to half-siblings who are also first cousins. There were legal conundrums too. Were the Bunker twins one entity or two? They certainly played that both ways at different times. Was an agreement by one binding on the other?

Apart from one lapse (from which their fiancées dissuaded them) the twin brothers rejected any suggestion of separating; a resolve attributed to their early upbringing by their mother in Siam. She also taught them how to stretch the band of ligament that joined their chests, so that they could stand side-by-side instead of face-to-face. At their autopsy, doctors determined that they could have been separated safely, yet even after death their wives forbade any attempt to divide them.

The death of the Bunkers was as enigmatic as their togetherness had been. Chang fell ill with breathing problems at Eng's house. Although it was, by agreement, Eng's privilege to decide such things, he had to go to bed when Chang needed to, and to get up when Chang couldn't sleep. In the morning, one of their children woke Eng with the news "Uncle Chang is dead". Eng seemed resigned, saying, "Then I am going!" Eng died before the doctor arrived. Medical opinion could not agree on the cause of Eng's death. Wu cites the generally accepted belief that "on finding himself attached to a dead brother, Eng had been literally scared to death".

Cynthia Wu's excellent study is supplemented by a detailed analysis of the metaphors represented by conjoined twins (including the Bunkers) in films, plays and literature. Another chapter correlates the social plight of the disabled and the coloured immigrant with that of women; and yet another examines the ethnography of a large, extended kinship group such as the Bunker clan. Despite the academic language in parts, the book is relatively easy to read and full of fascinating details unearthed by Wu's thorough research – not just about the Bunkers, but about the social treatment and subsequent fate of 'freaks' generally.

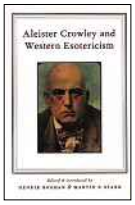
Bob Rickard

Fortean Times Verdict

STIMULATING AND WIDE-RANGING STUDY OF THE BUNKER TWINS **9**

It's that man again

Scholars turn the spotlight on the world's most notorious magician while Crowley's Enochian work is trotted out again



Aleister Crowley and Western Esotericism

Eds: Henrik Bogdan & Martin P Starr

Oxford UP 2012

Pb, 420pp, notes, ind, £22.50/$35.00, ISBN 9780199863099

FORTEAN TIMES BOOKSHOP PRICE £20.25

Enochian Magick

The Best of The Equinox, Vol 1.

Aleister Crowley

Weiser 2012

Pb, 223pp, illus. $18.95/£15.99, ISBN 9781578635306

FORTEAN TIMES BOOKSHOP PRICE £15.99

Aleister Crowley (1875–1947) was undoubtedly the most influential occultist of the 20th century and the academic world has been slow to turn its attention to him, as it has with the subject of magic in general. Regarding the latter, there's been some progress in recent decades; as to the former, Bogdan & Starr's volume is a welcome start, though there remains some way to go.

The cover illustration is an appallingly colourised photo that makes the bald Crowley look like a boiled egg wearing lipstick; and the book itself is something of a curate's egg of 15 articles, five of which have previously appeared in scholarly journals, some as long ago as the 1990s. Interestingly, despite the parade of academic credentials on show in the contributors' list, not a single author seems prepared to claim (or admit) to any practical experience with occultism, though one or two plainly have. This is not to say that a scholarly approach can't be productive; but we can certainly do without disparaging introductory remarks about the works of 'enthusiastic occultists'. So, how do the scholars do?

Naturally, there's a wide variety of viewpoints and subject-matter here, though occasionally the editorial selection seems a mite eccentric. Thus we have, in consecutive articles, the absurd situation where Gordan Djurdjevic argues (strongly, to my mind) for the absolute centrality of Indian Tantra in Crowley's magic, while Richard Kaczynski declares Tantric influences to be virtually negligible. As Fort remarked, "for every expert, there's an equal and opposite expert." Again, one wonders why some articles have been included at all. Tobias Churton's piece on Crowley and the Yezidis is very thin indeed, while Massimo Introvigne's investigation of Crowley's 'fascination' with Joseph Smith is almost entirely about the Mormons, the titular subject not even appearing in the first 10 pages; when it does, the material adduced could have been stated in two, rather than 30. As this is one of the articles that have been previously published, its appearance here seems inexcusable.

Nonetheless, there's some decent material here too. The reliable Ronald Hutton is good on Crowley and Wicca, while there are also fine pieces on his influences on Australian 'witch' Rosaleen Norton, Scientology and modern Satanism. Other subjects covered include Crowley and millenarianism, A E Waite, Freemasonry and so on. The proofreading, however, could be improved; notably, all the errors I spotted would not have been picked up by a spellchecker. However, the editors must take special responsibility for the most egregious error, on page 181, where a large-type subhead refers to the Cephaloedium Working of 1920–21, where it should plainly refer to the Cairo Working of 1904. The old school-report phrase, "must try harder" springs to mind.

Do the practitioners fare any better? Unfortunately not. *Enochian Magick* is introduced by respected occultist Lon Milo DuQuette, and also reprints his introduction to the 1992 edition of John Dee's magical diaries, *A True and Faithful Relation …* both of which are flimsy and frankly outdated. Regrettably, it seems an evil spell(checker?) has been cast again, and the 'Scarabeus' beetle of the original intro has now become a 'Scabrous'. This is simply unforgivable. Regrettably, the body of the book is worse, being photographic reproductions, with original page-numbering and running-heads, of pages from the 1974 anthology, *Gems From the Equinox*, comprising two of Crowley's Enochian pieces. *Liber Chanokh* presents Crowley's developed Enochian system, based on Dee's diaries, but the reproduction of the plates, particularly those of the Four Watchtowers, is so abysmal as to make them unusable. The rest of the book is a reprint of the revelatory text, *The Vision and the Voice*, but presented without Crowley's introduction, which is vital to the understanding of how the text was received; a subject not covered in DuQuette's new introduction either. Interested readers should instead see the fully annotated 1998 edition of *The Vision and the Voice*, which, being also published by Weiser, makes the appearance of this slipshod edition inexplicable.

This is apparently the first of an intended series of four reprints from the Equinox; I can only urge the publishers to stop now before they damage their reputation any further.

Steve Moore

Fortean Times Verdict

CROWLEY: SCHOLARS COULD DO BETTER — 7

ENOCHIAN: SHABBY AND UNWORTHY OF ITS SUBJECT — 2

Gramarye

The Journal of the Sussex Centre for Folklore, Fairy Tales and Fantasy, Issue 1

University of Chichester 2012

72pp, illus, ISBN 9781907852145, ISSN 20502915

AVAILABLE FROM HTTP://BIT.LY/ZH5GCC

Gramarye is the baby of a mixed marriage between the University of Chichester, where they work hard at grammar, and the haunted slopes of Pook's Hill, where they ply the crafts of glamour and enchantment. Cradled in the Sussex Centre for Folklore, Fairy Tales & Fantasy, the newborn has the blessing of several scholarly godmothers. Foremost is Jacqueline Simpson, whose long-running exchange of myths and motifs with Terry Pratchett led them to collaboration on *The Folklore of Discworld*. Jacqueline and Terry are both legends in their own right and have the true Weatherwax insouciance about magic, which is not there to be gawped at, but to be used. Advice for budding authors: steep yourself in tradition, learn the practical skills of the past, and don't read any fantasy.

Karl Bell writes on Spring-heeled Jack, the longest paper in the journal. Jack has been getting a lot of outings lately; this one puts him in the context of melodrama and penny dreadfuls. Diane Purkiss reflects on the eerie depositions of Scottish witches confessing their faith in Christsonday, the Queen of Elfhame, and other outsiders or parodies of Christianity. These private myths are rich in stark images of lust and power and the hunt of the black stag in the snow, but unfortunately Purkiss drowns them in a pick-and-mix paganism stretching from Cernunnos to Val Camonica. "Horses are gods of Celts... The Tain might be relevant too". Or not.

There's a shorter piece by Maria Nikolajeva on her childhood reading of Andersen ("My favourites were about the utmost misery"). Nowadays editions are softened and censored to present a more positive outlook, but in a world where everyone dies, children need something

better than 'positive'. *Gramarye* concludes with a new translation of a Danish folktale and a couple of reviews. It's a promising beginning.
Jeremy Harte

Fortean Times Verdict
SPLENDID ADDITION TO THE STUDY OF FOLKLORE AND FAIRLY TALES **8**

The First Fossil Hunters

Dinosaurs, Mammoths and Myth in Greek and Roman Times

Adrienne Mayor

Princeton University Press 2011
Pb, 349pp, illus, notes, refs, ind, $18.95, ISBN 9780691150130
FORTEAN TIMES BOOKSHOP PRICE £12.95

The Greek island of Samos was once believed to bear traces of Neades, enormous primæval beasts whose piercing cries tore chasms into the ground. After Greeks encountered elephants in Alexander the Great's wars, the explanation for Samos's giant bones was revised. These were no longer the monstrous Neades but the remains of the god Dionysus's war elephants, brought to Samos to do battle with the Amazons.

Ancient Greeks had spotted the similarity between living elephants and the fossil mammoths abundant beneath the soil of Samos. And the Greek biographer Plutarch observed "ancient Egypt was once a sea," accounting for the "abundance of mollusc shells in its mines and on its mountains." Herodotus claimed to have seen Egypt's fossil shellfish for himself.

But apart from that great pioneer of zoology Baron Georges Cuvier, whose works noted that the Greeks had collected fossil mammal bones, the extensive palæontology of the Classical world somehow slipped out of the history of science and into the dustbin of "damned" data. In *The First Fossil Hunters*, classicist and science historian Adrienne Mayor digs up this fascinating lost world.

The Greeks believed the long-dead protagonists of their epics were literally larger than life, that the humans of their own era had become pale shadows of the mighty 10ft(3m)-tall heroes and demi-gods of old. Contemporary philosophy was able to explain how a "degenerate" nature could by then only produce puny, five feet tall humans.

Jumbled elephant or mammoth bones separated from their tusks could easily be mistaken for those of an upright giant hero. A veritable bone fever gripped Greek cities; they collected the treasured relics of these prodigious heroes, even to the point of looting expeditions and wars with rival cities. Fossil exposures caused by collapsing "mounds" became ancient Greek tourist attractions. The historian Philostratus, writing in the second century AD, recalled joining a seaborne rush to visit a 30ft (9m) long "human" skeleton temporarily visible after a sea cliff at Sigeum collapsed.

The original gold-guarding griffons, identified as indigenous to what is now Kazakhstan and Mongolia, were described as "quadrapedal birds" without wings – these came later. The meticulous Athenian playwright Aeschylus describes Prometheus bound, pecked at by "wingless gryphons". Griffons were, suggests Major, the skeletons of the beaked dinosaurs Protoceratops and its smaller relative Psittacosaurus, preserved after burial by Cretaceous sandstorms, often among gold-bearing deposits.

In ancient Egypt, devotees donated blackened fossil teeth and bone shards by the ton to the shrines of Set, prince of darkness, at Matmur and Qua. And the "dragon bones" until recently mined in China to be ground up for traditional medicines were so-called as a term of convenience. The Chinese knew they were unearthing the remains of prehistoric giraffe relatives and deer. That's why Chinese dragons are often depicted with antlers.

Classical Corner fans will love the extensive "Ancient Testimonia" appendix, with quotations on obvious fossil finds from numerous Greek and Roman sources – some so undeservedly obscure that these are their first English translations.
Matt Salusbury

Fortean Times Verdict
THE SHOCK! HEROES OF HOMER'S ILIAD WERE MAMMOTHS! **8**

Wet 'n' weird

America's Great Lakes are host to lots of strange phenomena and creatures

Paranormal Great Lakes

An Illustrated Encyclopedia

Charles Cassady Jr

Schiffer 2009
Pb, 192pp, illus, bib, ind, $14.99/£12.95, ISBN 9780764332951
FORTEAN TIMES BOOKSHOP PRICE £12.95

The Great Lakes – Huron, Superior, Ontario, Erie and Michigan – are host to ghosts, monsters, UFOs, disappearances and other fortean events.

This engaging A–Z covers everything from haunted lighthouses and ghost lights to shipwrecks and mysterious monsters. Cassady Jr sets the scene in the introduction, where he remembers, as a boy, imagining the blue of the five lakes looking like a clawed hand bursting through the yellow ink of land on the map as though "something huge and ravenous on the other side of the map were trying to roughly pry open the US–Canadian border at the eastern end of the North American continent."

As an adult, he examines the evidence in a level-headed fashion, perceptively noting that "the persistence of inaccuracy, lies, and foolishness, like barnacles, is a continual nuisance in the field of paranormal investigation. Sober, plain facts, like fish, become slippery and hard to hold… it is quite a conceptual leap… to ghostly ships, lighthouse poltergeists, alien spacecraft, Indian curses or portals to other dimensions. Yet something in the human imagination snags on such rumors, even here in the hardheaded American Midwest."

For instance, in terms of ship disappearances, it is important to note that the lakes contain an estimated 20 per cent of the world's fresh water and are effectively inland seas. Conditions can rapidly turn nasty, and fierce storms have sunk an estimated 6,000+ vessels, though disappearances have fallen to almost zero in modern times.

The true test of a book of this type is if you can dip into it at any part and become so absorbed with the accounts and in the cross references that you emerge not realising so much time had passed. Cassady Jr's encyclopedia passes this test with ease.

It is full of unexpected delights. In the realm of aquatic creatures these include the three-foot long stuffed Erie Baby lake monster, Igopogo (a cousin of the lake monster known as Ogopogo) and even a 1782 sighting of a mermaid in Lake Superior. The illustrations include photographs of ships and lighthouses plus black and white artwork depicting types of phenomena seen in the area. It would have been nice to have seen reproductions of witnesses' original sketches included, also.
Peter Hassall

Fortean Times Verdict
HAUNTED LIGHTHOUSES, INDIAN CURSES AND AQUATIC ODDITIES **8**

To order any of these titles – or any other book in print – contact the
FORTEAN TIMES BOOKSHOP
Telephone: 08430600031 Fax: 01326 569555 Email: FT@sparkledirect.co.uk
Address: Fortean Times Bookshop, PO Box 60, Helston TR13 0TP.
We accept all major credit and debit cards including Switch & Amex. Cheques or postal orders should be made payable to the FT Bookshop. Delivery is 7–10 days, subject to availability. Postage & packing is free within the UK.

BC manimals

An essential starting-point for anyone interested in Canada's larger inhabitants

Sasquatch in British Columbia

A Chronology of Incidents & Important Events

Christopher Leo Murphy & Thomas Steenburg

Hancock House Publishers 2012

Pb, 526pp, illus, bib, ind, $29.95/£22.99, ISBN 9780888397218

FORTEAN TIMES BOOKCLUB PRICE £22.49

This is the first book that attempts to catalogue all known British Columbia reports and does a splendid job, bringing to light new reports and revisiting old cases. British Columbia is massive – about 365,900 sq miles (948,000 sq km) – with a population of only 4.4 million, so a sizeable population of "hidden" Sasquatch is quite feasible.

A Harrison Mills report from 1909 discusses Peter Williams seeing large footprints, "tracks measured 22in [56cm] in length..." One can only imagine how tall a creature making such prints would have to be. Some critical evaluation would have been useful. For instance, in 1973 Pete Nab, then 13, claimed to have shot a Sasquatch 8 to 9 ft (2.4-2.7m) tall with a .22-calibre rifle with two other boys present. In 1980 Thomas Steenburg interviewed Nab, but no mention is made of the credibility of the source or whether the other witnesses were interviewed. A couple of reports, from 1914 and 1928, relate experiences where a Sasquatch spoke with the observer, something I would have rejected. Other reports, like the one mentioned from Etolin Island, Alaska, have gripping narratives. Notes witness Dana Jacallen: "He turned his head to stare at me straight in the eyes. His teeth were showing but it was not a snarl or a grin. I want to say it was a knowing glint in his eye. He had intelligence. I knew I could place a killing shot [the witness was 15ft/4.6m away], but also knew it would be wrong, even criminal."

I know of no instance in the literature where sexual behaviour between Sasquatch is noted, but here we have a 1966 report from a hunter observed three Sasquatch from about 300ft (90m): "[T]hey moved further away... at this point, one of the creatures appeared to copulate with another, but not in the fashion typical of bears – one creature had laid on its back, and the two were face to face. The third creature was standing around nearby."

In 1977 an unnamed man along with a hunter claim to have seen the corpse of a Sasquatch in the Harrison Mills area. After a 20-minute look at the "ape-like" creature, which was about 7ft (2m) tall, they left and reported it to the "Fish and Wildlife". However, the story is doubtful without photographs or a piece of the carcass. In a 1975 report, a prospector found an unusual nest, around the outer rim of which "branches had been woven in and out", something that would require the dexterity of a hand similar to our own.

I have a few quibbles: 1992 is noted as the date for the "first scientific book on Sasquatch", which ignores Dr John Napier's *Bigfoot* (1972); John Green's *On The Track of the Sasquatch* was released in 1968, not 1969; and the Bill Bedry Sasquatch photos were investigated by René Dahinden at the time and found to be a hoax, a fact the author seems unaware of. However, this is a useful reference book, with a large number of photographs and maps.

Daniel Perez

Fortean Times Verdict

USEFUL GUIDE TO A LARGE (AND BIGFOOT-POPULATED?) AREA **9**

The Atheist's Bible

The Most Dangerous Book That Never Existed

Georges Minois, trans: Lys Ann Weiss

University of Chicago Press 2012

Hb, 249pp, $30.00/£19.50, ISBN 9780226530291

FORTEAN TIMES BOOKCLUB PRICE £17.55

For centuries the Christian world was haunted by rumours of a scandalous book, known by its title alone: *The Treatise of the Three Impostors*. The text, it was understood, fleshed out the title's claim that Moses, Jesus and Mohammed were all tricksters and charlatans who had hoodwinked humanity with visions of an afterlife and threats of eternal punishment, and subjected the world to their dominion through ignorance and fear. But who was the author of this ultimate blasphemy? The Pope accused the Holy Roman Emperor; European scholars accused Jewish and Arab freethinkers; rival sects and churches accused one another. Religious sceptics, as they gradually emerged, pursued the fabled text like an atheist grail. But as Georges Minois reveals in this concise and elegant investigation, there was no such book, at least until the late 17th century – at which point, in a textbook example of what folklorists call ostention, it was discovered (or written) simultaneously in multiple versions and languages.

In telling this story, Minois assembles fascinating evidence for the wider question of when and how atheism first emerged. Had there always been people convinced that organised religion was an imposture, or did this idea only become formalised in modern times? He identifies various strands of proto-atheist thought reaching back into the Middle Ages: on the one hand wandering students such as the Goliards whose ribald drinking songs (collected as the *Carmina burana*) mocked the hypocrisy of priests and celebrated living for the moment, and on the other scholastic philosophers who, in the guise of dialogues or disputationes, subtly put the argument of the *Three Impostors* before piously demolishing it. He also shows how the idea flourished in an 'age of imposture', rife with pretenders and usurpers, false saints, false kings, false emperors and false (including female) popes.

But it was the Renaissance and its rediscovery of Classical philosophies such as Epicureanism, which taught there was nothing beyond the material world, that opened the floodgates. Although atheist views were still officially punished by death, they were widely held in private circles such as Queen Elizabeth I's court; Sweden's enlightened Queen Cristina scoured Europe for a copy of the Three Impostors, and sceptical philosophers, particularly Baruch Spinoza, discreetly edged towards its message.

By the 18th century forging copies of the *Three Impostors* had become a boom industry, with the most authentically sulphurous-looking selling for huge sums to collectors of rare and forbidden titles. It was in his *Letter to the Author of the Three Impostors* (1770) that Voltaire made his famous statement: 'if God didn't exist, it would be necessary to invent him'. The same had turned out to be true of the classic statement of atheism.

Mike Jay

Fortean Times Verdict

OSTENTION FOR BEGINNERS: THE SCANDALOUS BOOK THAT WASN'T **8**

Mythology

The Complete Guide to Our Imagined Worlds

Christopher Dell

Thames & Hudson 2012

Hb, 352pp, illus, bib, ind, £24.95, ISBN 9780500516157

FORTEAN TIMES BOOKCLUB PRICE £22.45

The glory of this lavish and comprehensive survey of the world's most enduring stories of gods, heroes and monsters lies in the 410 reproductions of artworks from every major tradition, chosen with great flair, often presenting unfamiliar works instead of the obvious and well known.

Edward Young

Fortean Times Verdict

GORGEOUS SURVEY OF THE WORLD'S MYTHOLOGIES **9**

ALSO RECEIVED

We leaf through a small selection of the dozens of books that have arrived at Fortean Towers in recent months...

The Alchemy Press Book of Ancient Wonders

Eds: Jan Edwards & Jenny Barber

Alchemy Press 2012
Pb, 249pp, £10.00, ISBN 9780953226085

A novel anthology of short stories, by 11 seasoned writers of science-fiction and fantasy, on the senses of wonder and intrigue engendered by ancient sites, burial mounds, lost cities and peculiar stones. Entertaining, fresh and easy to read.

Consulting Spirit

Ian D Rubenstein

Anomalist Books 2011
Pb, 271pp, £10.00, ISBN 9781933665559

Ian Rubenstein is a primary care doctor whose outlook on the 'spiritual' aspects of life changed significantly one day when a patient apparently went into a trance, speaking as Ian's long-dead grandfather. The voice told him many family details Ian was quite convinced that no one, including some of his family, could have known. This is his good-natured and chatty account of how he came to terms with the discarnated and poltergeists, and the people who channel or chase them (mediums and 'ghost-busters'), while finding a balance between his natural scepticism and curiosity. He settles upon a "path of practical mediumship" which he has applied successfully to his medical practice, and is keen to tell us how.

Intervention

Alan Butler

Duncan Baird Publishers 2012
Pb, 197pp, notes, ind, £12.99, ISBN 9781780283883

Butler – author of books on the Roslyn Chapel mystery, the Moon as an alien artefact, advanced ancient technology and prehistoric monuments – seems to combine them all with more of the same in this volume. Here, his theme is that the great inventors, scientists, thinkers and teachers of the past have come back from the future – or who worked with entities from the future – to seed the past with clues and messages intended to guide and advance our knowledge, life, science and philosophy. Apparently, UFOs play a part in this 'intervention' and so do the numerological, geometrical and mathematical mysteries enshrined in ancient sites.

This time it's not aliens but our future selves who are behind it all. An interesting thesis, well argued, but requiring a considerable leap of faith.

The Hermetic Link

Jacob Slavenburg

Ibis Books 2012
Pb, 461pp, notes, ind, $29.95, ISBN 9780892541676

This is an intense and detailed study of many different aspects of the Greek god Hermes, his Roman counterpart Mercurius and his Egyptian antecedent Thoth (the husband/brother of Isis), and the influence of the so-called hermetic traditions throughout European history.

The Thrice Great Hermes was more than just a celestial postman and conjuror; his was the subtle cultural force that shaped consciousness and civilisation. He was a messenger between Heaven and Earth; a guide and guardian of souls. He was credited with inventing the alphabet, literature and speech (particularly oratory), and of laying the foundations of science and philosophy.

Slavenburg – who spent years poring over original literature, including scrolls in the Nag Hammadi library – shows how the ideas credited to or inspired by Hermes Trismegistus extended beyond occultism, astrology and alchemy to flower in other fields, such as architecture, medicine, chemistry, physics, astronomy and modern psychology. In mysticism too, this movement affected developing explanations of evil, reincarnation and the afterlife.

So profound and esoteric is his influence on Western magical and religious traditions that images of Hermes can be found in great European churches.

With Hermes as his muse, Slavenburg writes with passion, wisdom, scholarship and clarity.

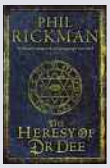
AD: After Disclosure

Richard M. Dolan & Bryce Zabel

New Page Books (newpagebooks.com) 2012
Pb, pp335, ind, notes, illus, £14.99, ISBN 9781601632227

The authors present a different take on the perennial chestnut of government conspiracy about UFOs and aliens. What if there really were UFOs? Suppose our governments were regularly dealing with visitors from other worlds. How would the people of Earth react to such history-changing events on the day these matters could not be concealed any longer? Would the open arrival of alien spaceships drive the world insane? Or would we welcome our new extraterrestrial masters? Would the planet's military unite against the invaders? Would proof of life on other worlds mean the end of religion? How would the global economy – not to mention our science – react to an influx of alien technology? And so on. Disclosure, for the authors, means "when the government finally reveals the truth about alien contact". Zabel was one of the creators of NBC's Emmy award-winning UFO invasion series *Dark Skies*. The writing is engaging, intelligent and even thought-provoking, but largely speculative. It also suffers from the same fault as most Hollywood films about global issues: it's very much an America-centric presentation.

FORTEAN FICTION



The Heresy of Dr Dee

Phil Rickman

Corvus 2012
Hb, £14.99, 446pp, ISBN 9781848872769

This is the second in Phil Rickman's 'The Papers of Dr Dee' series, packed with historical detail and characters from the Tudor period. It is the 1560s; at the end of a sunless summer, talk of the End Time is rife. Dr John Dee, magus, mathematician, alchemist and Elizabeth I's advisor on the mysteries of the Hidden, finds himself attempting to navigate his way through the internecine nastiness of Church and Crown in the perhaps not so virginal queen's court. Could Lord Robert Dudley, most hated man in Britain and Dee's friend, have been responsible for the death of his own wife, thus paving the way to marriage to Queen Bess herself? After a rash promise to the Queen, Dee journeys to his ancestral home on the Welsh borders, with Dudley in tow, to acquire the Shewstone of Wigmore, said to be a supernatural portal to future events. When Dee arrives at his destination he finds the bones of a thousand Englishmen who died at the hands of a legendary Welsh brigand; and when a fresh body turns up, similarly mutilated, the treachery of the Court seems positively cosy in comparison with small-town political rivalry and superstition. The narrative Rickman affords Dee is compelling, and deftly elliptical at times. His atmospheric depiction of the mire of London is matched by that of the mud of the borders. With gruesome ritual murder, witchcraft and dark necromantic arts aplenty, *The Heresy of Dr John Dee* offers up a feast of fantastical fare for any fortean.

Nick Cirkovic

SEND REVIEW COPIES OF DVDS, BLU-RAYS AND GAMES TO:
FORTEAN TIMES, PO BOX 71602, LONDON E17 0QD.

Berberian Sound Studio

Dir Peter Strickland, UK 2012

Artificial Eye, £15.99 (DVD) / £19.99 (Blu-ray)

Peter Strickland's *Berberian Sound Studio* must be one of the most intriguing, unusual and – in its way – ambitious films to emerge from the UK in a while, boasting 1970s stylings, a clever *pasticcio* of *giallo* tropes and a formal chutzpah you'd associate with the young Godard; and, the cherry on the cake, is an unforgettable central performance from the brilliant Toby Jones.

Jones plays Gilderoy, a mild-mannered, middle-aged sound engineer who has flown from his home in leafy Dorking to an Italian sound studio to work on the soundtrack of a film called *The Equestrian Vortex* at the invitation of its director, the largely absent playboy Santini (Antonio Mancino). Santini's movie has nothing to do with horses and a lot to do with the rape, torture and killing of its female characters, witches or not, as Gilderoy quickly discovers to his dismay. He's called upon to work with a pair of strange looking Foley artists (both called Massimo) in hacking watermelons, stabbing cabbages and pulling apart radishes to create the sounds of physical trauma that accompany the presumably horrific visuals being projected on the studio's screen. It's Strickland's stroke of genius that all we ever see of *The Equestrian Vortex* is its brilliantly pastiched title sequence; other than that, we only register the acts of extreme violence the film contains through the aural analogues Gilderoy has to make and his increasingly uneasy reactions to the process in which he is involved. Being asked to create the sound of a red-hot poker being inserted into a woman's vagina is a breaking point, and Gilderoy begins to unravel.

The film creates a disturbingly claustrophobic world; Gilderoy is isolated by his inability to speak Italian and by the subtly bullying behaviour of his strange colleagues, particularly the grumpy producer Francesco (Cosimo Fusco). His increasingly desperate attempts to claim back his flight expenses from the world's most unhelpful secretary, though trivial enough, hint at a darkly Kafkaesque world from which there is no escape. Letters from his mother describing the efforts of chiffchaffs to nest outside Gilderoy's shed in Dorking provide his only contact with the outside world, and the only moments in the film that take place beyond the windowless studio are actually fragments of Gilderoy's earlier short film about the wildlife of Box Hill in Surrey. Here, even dreams and visions are of the celluloid variety, and from this point on *Berberian Sound Studio* becomes increasingly hermetic and self-absorbed, playing a set of variations that are more formal than thematic, collapsing its abortive Hitchcock (*Rear Window*)/ Antonioni (*Blow Up*) narrative into the cinematic equivalent of a kind of *musique concrète*; finally, the title makes sense, referencing as it does composer Luigi Nono's muse (and sometime missus) Cathy Berberian. Director Santini affects to be deeply offended when Gilderoy describes *The Equestrian Vortex* as a horror film; and Peter Strickland also disavows the label, preferring to think of *Berberian Sound Studio* as a piece exploring the collision between high and low art, of the world of sound itself and its crucial role in creating cinematic fantasies and illusions that, like us viewers, are implicated in the identity politics and misogyny of cinema itself.

If that all sounds a bit like a regurgitated BFI monograph from the 1980s, then it should be said that there's absolutely nothing so po-faced and theoretically abstruse about Strickland's film, which is far too good for that. But those expecting a satisfying narrative experience should look elsewhere. Yes, perhaps ultimately there's a slight whiff of preciousness about it all; it's rather like those people who fetishise analogue synths and subsist on an aural diet of early Stereolab and obscure Italian soundtracks. from the 1970s. Perhaps it's all a bit too cool for school, a bit too much like finding yourself trapped in a pop-up restaurant in Dalston curated by a balding hipster intent on sharing his collection of theremin records with you. But, then again, at least for its first two-thirds, Strickland's film is a thing of technical brilliance, compelling beauty and genuinely unsettling atmosphere; whether you buy into the formal games and narrative disintegration of the last 30 minutes – or think that Strickland has simply run out of ideas, allowing style to triumph over substance – may simply be down to taste. On a first viewing, I was left undecided; but if a demonstration were needed that Strickland's film perhaps becomes too much of a gossamer creation for its own good – a film that needs to be viewed in the same kind of hermetic situation that it itself creates – then here it is. In what turned out (unexpectedly; after all, one usually has the sense of an ending) to be the film's final moments we were distracted by the sound of a voluble nutter yelling incomprehensible things from the street below. The voices of the real world had broken in upon us, and the spell was broken. "What happened?" asked my companion.

"I don't know," I said. "We'll have to rewind".

David Sutton

Fortean Times Verdict

BEST UK FILM OF 2012 OR ALL STYLE OVER SUBSTANCE? **7**

Air Doll

Dir Kore-Eda Hirokazu, Japan 2009

Matchbox Films, £15.99 (DVD)

Almost as soon as we had stories of humankind ungratefully turning its back on its creator god, there followed the myths of our creations outgrowing us. In our most technophobic nightmares this manifests as the replicants of *Bladerunner* with their sophisticated meditations on memory and mortality, or the genocidal 7550 series of the *Terminator* movies. Here, it's a sex-doll called Nozomi who is on a journey of self-empowerment.

Admittedly Doona Bae (Nozomi), best known for appearances in *Sympathy for Mr Vengeance* and *Cloud Atlas*, is slightly more attractive than your average Golem or Frankenstein's Monster, but she is, in the end, just a grotesque, latex doll, complacent and compliant.

Galvanised by rain-water rather than lightning, she goes on a journey of self-discovery; and very slow -moving it all is. What could have been a forum for discussing notions of identity and humanity is merely the framework for a series of 'innocent abroad' set-pieces.

Very much of the school of *Scissorhands*, Nozomi moves like an awkward ballerina and smiles a lot at children and animals, finally

finding some sort of sanctuary by getting a job in a movie rental store, the perennial home of the misfit. It's here she finds love, but a final act takes us uncomfortably deep into Oshima territory, with graphic sexual mutilation passing as passion. Ultimately less than the sum of its parts, this is way too long, ponderous and superficial.
Tim Weinberg

Fortean Times Verdict
SEX DOLL FILM WITH INFLATED SENSE OF OWN IMPORTANCE **5**

Hollow

Dir Michael Axelgaard, UK 2011
Metrodome, £12.99 (DVD)

Just when *VHS* left me hoping that the found footage horror genre had breathed its sorry last, along comes an even less enthralling British effort about four young twits with a video camera. This time, it's a spooky tree in Suffolk that's giving them the willies, but given that this is neither MR James nor Algernon Blackwood, I wouldn't worry too much about sharing their fears. There's lots of sexual tension and much running around in the dark, and an outing to Dunwich (Suffolk, not Arkham County) is probably the highlight, complete with a leering and obviously mental old fisherman who guts a fish in an unnecessarily unpleasant fasion (cf. last month's *Dark Nature* for a better class of fish-gutting) and provides some backstory on the legend of the suicide tree. The whole thing strectches a minimal premise and a similar budget to breaking point well before its running time is up.
David Sutton

Fortean Times Verdict
YET ANOTHER TIRED ENTRY IN AN EXHAUSTED SUBGENRE **4**

In the Dark Half

Dir Alastair Siddons, UK 2012
StudioCanal, £14.99 (DVD)

Another film full of dead animals (rabbits, rather than obviously stuffed foxes, this time) but a far more recommendable one. Set in a housing estate on the edgelands of Bristol and in the lowering hills and woods above it, Alastair Siddons's film creates a world full of magic and menace out of distinctly ordinary materials and a tiny budget, relying on excellent per-

The Reverend's Review

FT's resident man of the cloth REVEREND PETER LAWS dons his dog collar and faces the flicks that Church forgot! (www.theflicksthatchurchforgot.com)

PIRANHA

Dir Joe Dante, US 1978
Second Sight, £15.99 (Blu-ray)

PIRANHACONDA

Dir Jim Wynorski, US 2011
Chelsea Films, £9.99

By the late 1970s, filmmakers were ripping off Spielberg's *Jaws* with a sort of mad, giggling abandon and every third exploitation flick featured animals or insects munching on humanity's innards. Universal even tried to take out an injunction against *Piranha* because it clashed with their own release of *Jaws 2* the same year. Spielberg saw the film, however, and said "This picture's OK. Leave them alone". He even went on to work with director Joe Dante on future projects. So how does Spielberg's favourite *Jaws* clone hold up, 30 years on? Very well actually, probably because it's not half as much of a clone as Universal thought, and is full of surprisingly original ideas. Screenwriter John Sayles avoids sharks and instead has thousands of razor-toothed piranha let loose in a Texan lake resort. Unlike Spielberg's Great White, these monsters have backstory: they were engineered as a weapon for Vietnam! The main hero (Bradford – you'll recognise him – Dillman) is no heroic Chief Brody either, but rather the town drunk. The heroine (Heather – you probably won't recognise her – Menzies Urich) is a unique creation. Not so much because she's a plucky, female insurance investigator, but because she's the one who releases the piranhas in the first place. Yes, every single bit of chewed flesh in the film can be laid at her door. You just don't see that sort of blatant anti-heroism in many movies, though she seems pretty much oblivious to her own guilt.

What really works are the piranhas themselves. With all the problems Spielberg had with Bruce the dummy shark on *Jaws,* he may well have wished for Dante's economy. Turns out that just squirting underwater blood at someone while shaking a rubber fish in their face looks pretty convincing. The lush score by Italian legend Pino Donaggio gives an occasional sense of class, but the completely unnecessary/fantastic car and speedboat chases remind us that we are still in exploitation territory – even down to producer Roger Corman's much loved use of the drop cut, where every other frame in a car chase is removed to make things look faster and more cartoony.

I have a feeling that Dante's people won't be taking out an injunction against the makers of *Piranhaconda*. This Corman-produced, SyFy channel facepalmer is about a team of filmmakers and mercenaries stalked by a stupid monster. Tarantino favourite Michael Madsen would be spinning in his grave if he wasn't actually alive and in this. The film uses 30 years progress in effects technology to end up looking 30 times less convincing than Dante's film. Still, I guess the spirit's the same.

Spielberg's 'threat from the water' plot will no doubt be rehashed for years to come; but then didn't he just nick it from Jack Arnold's *Creature from the Black Lagoon* anyway?

Fortean Times Verdict
AN EXPLOITATION CLASSIC. AND A NOT SO CLASSIC **8/4**

formances, an intriguing script and a strong sense of place.

Marie (a quite mesmerising performance from young Jessica Barden, far more convincing here than as a hoodie in *Comedown*) is a strange, withdrawn schoolgirl who spends her spare time escaping from a gloom-laden one-parent household and running off up the hill, where she steals rabbits from neighbour Filthy's traps and buries them in her secret den. When Filthy's young son dies suddenly, Marie is sure that the 'spirits' on the hill (or are they Machen's Little People?) can bring him back, and the film explores the difficult relationship between this odd girl and the rough, bereaved father. It's intensely atmospheric and often quite moving, although a twist that tries to do an M Night Shyamalan (why would you bother?) is an unfortunate and rare misstep in an otherwise impressively achieved little gem of a film.

David Sutton

Fortean Times Verdict
MAGICAL MICRO-BUDGET MOVIE IS AN UNSETTLING LITTLE GEM **7**

Santa Sangre

Dir Alejandro Jodorowsky, Mexico/Italy 1989

Mr Bongo, £13.99 (DVD) / £15.99 (Blu-ray)

When Chilean director Alejandro Jodorowsky is involved, you can be sure of a fortean film… His infamous 1970s outings – *El Topo* (1970) and *The Holy Mountain* (1973) – are packed with mythic weirdness. His most accessible film is *Santa Sangre*, chronicling the lives of a group of circus performers. When his knife-throwing father is caught *in flagrante* with the tattooed contortionist, young magician Fenix (Adan Jodorowsky) witnesses him cutting off his wife's arms before then committing suicide. The older Fenix (Axel Jodorowsky) is seemingly reunited with his armless mother, replacing her missing limbs with his own by standing behind her – but who is in control? There's much more weirdness than a simple synopsis can ever hope to convey, and the film is packed with allusions to previous offbeat movies such as Tod Browning's *The Unknown* (1927, featuring Lon Chaney as an armless – or is he? – knife thrower), *The Hands of Orlac* (as in 1935's *Mad Love*), *The Invisible Man* (1933), and (quite subtly) Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960).

The circus and carnival are rich pickings for fortean tales, and in this compendium of unreliable narrators, dodgy asylums, youthful romance, and theatrical illusion, Jodorowsky has concocted a surreal, psychedelic dreamscape that eludes simple rational comprehension. Visually impressive – especially in an early sequence featuring an elephant funeral – *Santa Sangre's* images will stay with you for many years. Comprehensive extras provide some background, but don't really get to the bizarre heart of this brilliantly enigmatic, beautiful, mystifying, magical conundrum of a film.

Brian J Robb

Fortean Times Verdict
VERY WEIRD AND VERY, VERY WONDERFUL: RECOMMENDED **9**

Fairy Tales

Dir various

BFI, £15.99 (DVD))

This compendium of painstakingly hand-coloured fairytale films from the earliest years of cinema is a treasure trove. Comprising 25 short movies from the Pathé archives, the set includes a 28-page booklet with background information on the belle epoque's short-lived penchant for *scènes de feeries*, or fairy films. Alongside well-known tales like Ali Baba, Red Riding Hood and Sleeping Beauty, the set includes some offbeat items like *La Danse du diable* (1904), in which the devil summons a trio of celestial girls; *L'Album merveilleux* (1905), in which characters come to life from within the pages of a giant book; and the ghost story *La Légende du fantôme* (1908). Four bonus films include Méliès's *Barbe-bleu* (1901) and *Au Pays de l'or* (1908), in which a young woman explores the underground gold mine of some dwarves. All the films come with newly commissioned experimental musical accompaniment (of variable worth). Fantasy and the supernatural abound in these weird tales and each short reflects a long-lost primitive magic in strange storytelling and imaginative technique missing from so many of today's CGI-laden blockbusters.

Brian J Robb

Fortean Times Verdict
FANTASTIC FAIRYTALES ARE FREQUENTLY FORTEAN **8**

GAMES

ASSASSIN'S CREED 3

(Ubisoft, £44.99 X-box, PS3, Wii, £34.99 PC)

Followers of the *Assassin's Creed* games waited with anticipation for the release late last year of the third instalment of the imaginative and innovative saga and the promise of a new Assassin and new historical setting. Technically the seventh game in the series, it followed the conclusion of Ezio Auditore's turn as the Assassin and his rekindling of the Brotherhood in 2011's *Assassin's Creed Revelations*. At the end of that game revelations were indeed on offer, as earlier hints of powerful godlike beings and lost civilisations were confirmed with a reconstruction of that ancient but advanced era's destruction at the hands of an astronomical event. This was due to return and destroy us again on – yes, you guessed it – 21 December 2012. And so we start *Assassin's Creed III* in a mad dash to save the world (unless of course you got it at Christmas; in which case you're too late), as descendant of the Assassins Desmond Miles and his team search both underground in America and, through Desmond's genetic memory, into history itself for help from the First Civilisation.

With all the pre-release media attention focused on a young Native American Assassin flinging himself, tomahawk-flailing, into the midst of American Revolutionary battles, it comes as a bit of a surprise when you are initially blasted into the past and the body of a middle aged British gentleman called Haytham Kenway. Excusing yourself politely from a performance of *The Beggar's Opera* in London (pausing only to assassinate a punter), you're off across the Atlantic to the New World, where the game proper begins. Pre-revolutionary America is beautifully brought to life here from the young cities of Boston and New York to frontier villages and Native American settlements. The wild frontier is a vision of rustling, buzzing and frolicking nature, giving *Skyrim* a run for its money in detail and awe-inspiring sightseeing value. You can track a plethora of fauna, lay traps, or just climb trees and scale cliffs to your heart's content.

As Kenway, you rub shoulders with famous historical characters such as Benjamin Franklin and take part in mischief that will inflame tensions between the Colonials and the British, but the full potential of the frontier only reveals itself when you finally become Connor, the half Native American/half British Assassin who is the game's main protagonist. For the remainder of the game you follow the life of Connor from a young boy playing hide-and-seek in the forest through his becoming an Assassin to his involvement in the War of Independence and battles against the Templars, natural enemies of the Assassins. You get to take part in historical events like Paul Revere's midnight ride and the Boston Tea Party, to name just a couple. But being a part of history is not all Connor gets to do. As well as the aforementioned hunting and frontier freerunning, you also have the opportunity to find treasure, build up a homestead, recruit new Assassins and take to the sea for rousing naval battles. Of particular interest and amusement to the fortean are the Frontiersmen missions in which you get to investigate such mysteries as Sasquatch, the Headless Horseman, a Kraken and even a UFO which (mild spoiler alert!) all turn out, in fine *Scooby Doo* style, to have mundane explanations. It's all rip-roaring *Boy's Own* stuff, cinematic but also immersive and realistic, with lots to do if you want to explore the full potential of the game. From the controversial (my lips are sealed) ending of the game, this could very well be the last Assassin's Creed offering. If this should prove the series's swansong, then it's a suitably epic and polished conclusion.

Stuart Ferrol 9/10

Everything you need to know about the iPhone 5

MAGBOOK

THE INDEPENDENT GUIDE TO THE iPhone 5

The ultimate guide to all things iPhone

iOS 6 Maps Siri Passbook

ON SALE NOW!

Order your print or digital MagBook at **magbooks.com**

How We Were Made

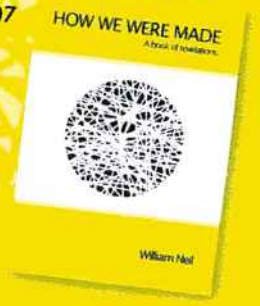
A book of revelations

by William Neil

THIS IS A MUCH ENLARGED 4th EDITION

"..... Neil demonstrates a host of dazzling numerical correspondences, mostly extrapolated from the famous number 666; multiplied out (6 x 6 x 6), it gives a key number 216, which produces other fundamental constants when it is divided or multiplied. ... Neil applies his findings to show how 666 and related numbers can be found in the human form... in monuments like the Great Pyramid and Stonehenge, in the Earth's position in the solar system, and in ancient and modern measuring systems. It can even be seen in the "building and placing" of the moon. ... If you're fascinated by numbers and sacred geometry, this book will be a treat."

Nexus Magazine review, Aug/Sept 2007



"Highly recommended"

David Icke

Order this best seller now!

ISBN 978-0-9545957-3-9

www.willmneil.co.uk

Send a cheque or postal order for £15, with your details, to:
Oracle Books. P.O. Box 2467, Reading, England, RG4 7WU
Also from Waterstone's, or any bookshop, and amazon.co.uk

Megalithic Tours

Cathar Country Tour

Rennes-le-Chateau the Sauniere Mystery, the story of the Cathars & much more

June 8th 2013 - 10 Days

Mysterious Earth Conference

Fascination Speakers, Stands & People

April 13th & 14th 2013

Ancient, Mystical & Historical Tours

Throughout England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, France & Malta

Contact: Neil McDonald
01772 728181 - 07799 061991
neil@megalithictours.com

www.megalithictours.com

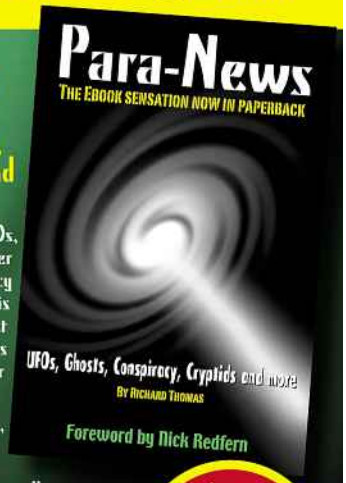
Para-News:

by Richard Thomas

UFOs, Ghosts, Conspiracy, Cryptids - and More

"Richard shares his data in an informative, entertaining and thought-provoking fashion."
-Nick Redfern

A gripping account of the very latest developments in the esoteric worlds of conspiracy theories, Ufology, paranormal investigations and the bizarre.


Para-News
THE EBOOK SENSATION NOW IN PAPERBACK
UFOs, Ghosts, Conspiracy, Cryptids and more
BY RICHARD THOMAS
Foreword by Nick Redfern

Most people will have heard of UFOs, ghosts and yetis, but what about the wilder shores of the paranormal, the conspiracy theorists and down right bizarre? In this book, one of the world's leading and most prolific paranormal bloggers takes readers on a voyage of discovery like no other ever written.

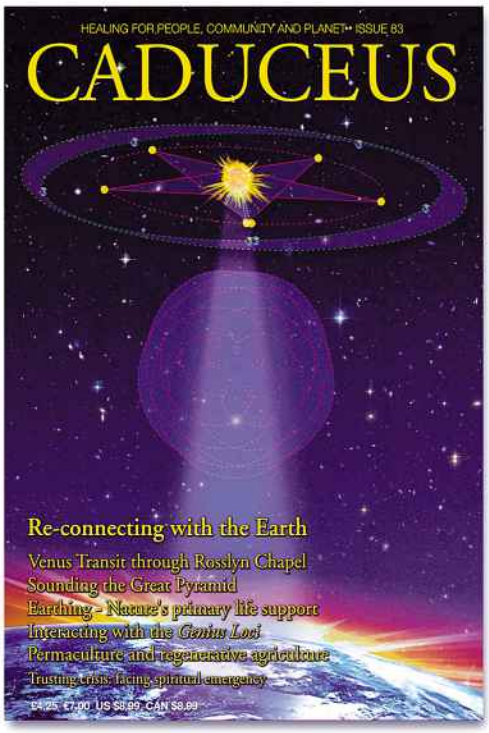
The key players are interviewed, explaining their views on the JFK assassination, the shadowy and sinister Illuminati, the influential Bilderberg Group, allegations of an incipient New World Order, cover ups and how hidden messages can be found in Hollywood movies such as Blade Runner and TV shows including the X-Files. Dean Haglund, Richard Dolan, Steve Watson, Richard Holland, Nick Pope, Timothy Good, Bryce Zabel, Christopher Knowles and Nick Redfern are all here.

Available now from Amazon.co.uk and all good book shops!

ISBN 9781907791727

Visit www.RichardThomas.eu
and www.Para-News.info

Transform your inner being


HEALING FOR PEOPLE, COMMUNITY AND PLANET• ISSUE 83
CADUCEUS
Re-connecting with the Earth
Venus Transit through Rosslyn Chapel
Sounding the Great Pyramid
Earthing - Nature's primary life support
Interacting with the Genius Loci
Permaculture and regenerative agriculture
Trusting crisis: facing spiritual emergency

Authority on healing – psychological, physical, spiritual, ecological – and spirituality since 1987

Summer issue contents (no.83), back issues and sub form on website

www.caduceus.info 01730 816799 simon@caduceus.info

Fortean Noticeboard

Do you have an event, book, company or website that Forteans would be interested in? This is a cost-effective opportunity to increase your exposure in a relevant marketplace, to over 30,000 readers in the UK.* For more information contact: joy_lazenby@dennis.co.uk - 0207 907 6717

Books

MME290: Did the Nazis have access to captured UFO technology? Were they forced to conceal their own 'Roswell' event during the summer of 1943; after a crash-retrieval deep within the Third Reich? And did this event result in an alleged secret pact between the Allies after the War, in an attempt to repel an impending alien invasion? Read S.M.Deeming's new 'Me290' science fiction series - including the latest instalment - 'The Squadron' - available to order/reserve on Amazon and Kindle. For more information go to: www.smdeeming.co.uk

HORROR author Lisamarie Lamb presents 'Some Body's At The Door', a collection of stories to chill the soul and haunt the mind. Available from Amazon.co.uk

HOW WE ARE MADE: A Book of Revelations by William Neil, 4th Edition. Send a cheque or postal order for £15, with your details, to: PO BOX 2467, Reading, England, RG4 7WU. Also from Waterstone's or any bookshop, and amazon.co.uk. www.willmneil.co.uk

THE WORLD AS I SEE IT by S ROB. Price £4.97 or $7.97 is a book of poetry that takes you on a journey into the mystical world of demons, time travel, and different planes of existence.... 'A journey into the world through the eyes of S Rob'. For information on S Rob occult consultant www.spellcaster-psychic.co.uk.The book is available in print at www.createspace.com/4048544 or print and kindle at www.amazon.co.uk

OCCULT, earth mysteries, supernatural, controversies, folklore; free second hand book catalogue available on request from 29 Keeble Park, Maldon, CM9 6YG. TEL 01621850709, TEXT 07503 246585.

Dowsing

DOWSING COURSES WITH BSD: Foundation course for beginners. 2/3 March,11/12 May & 8/9 June. Dowsing for Health Course 16/17 March and much more. The British Society of Dowsers: at the heart of Dowsing since 1933. Tel 01684 576 969 www.britishdowsers.org

Haunted Hotel Tour

SOUTH HAMS: Enjoy a four night ghost hunting tour in our four Devon properties, Woodcombe Farm, the Lodge Hotel, the Old Vicarage and the Hope Cove Hotel. The tour costs £140 per person and can accommodate up to 26 persons. For all enquiries please call: 07850513336 or visit: www.classiccountryhouses.com

News letters

Diane Tessman, one of the most respected UFO/alien investigators and contacts, offers 3 unparalleled publications for the price of one! What do aliens want? Will they land? What do the new abundance of low level sightings signify? Read Diane's Exo-Trek-king! What predictions are there regarding climate imbalance, increasing super-storms, increased tectonic and electromagnetic activity? Read Diane's Change Times Quarterly! Want to know you are not alone? Read Star Network Heartline! For more info: info@earthchangepredictions.com samples available. Ask about print availability!

Aeons ago *everything* changed...

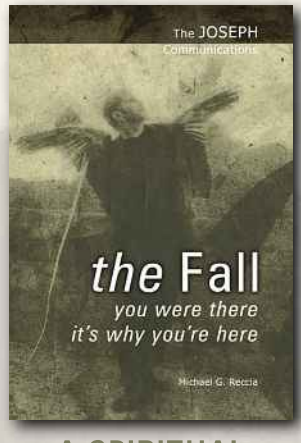
AND YOU WERE THERE!

...There's much more to you than you imagine. You have forgotten the cataclysm that created today's dysfunctional societies and wounded planet...

In *the Fall*, Joseph, highly respected spirit communicator, seeks to reactivate that astonishing inner knowledge of your spiritual origins.

Each chapter is a eureka moment and, by the last page, many, if not *all*, of those elusive answers regarding existence and the great mysteries will be elusive no longer.

From the Big Bang to your essential role in creation... if you seek meaning to life in general, and your life in particular, you *absolutely, definitely* should read *the Fall*.



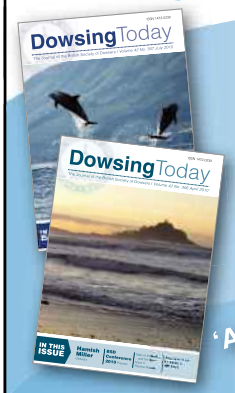
A SPIRITUAL MASTERPIECE

eBook available from all good outlets.

...Your views of spirituality, science, and reality are about to change forever.

£14.95 (plus P&P) – available worldwide from:
www.josephspeaks.com
U.K. residents can also send cheque payable to Band of Light Media Ltd for £16.95 (includes P&P) to:
10 Sparrable Row, Briercliffe, Burnley, Lancashire, BB10 3QW.

From Mystery... To Mastery



Dowsing Courses

- Foundation for absolute beginners and novices
- Environmental Healing
- Earth Energies & Geopathic Stress
- Dowsing for Health
- Water Divining

Special offer! Join BSD now and receive our free magazine & e-newsletter

'At the heart of dowsing since 1933'

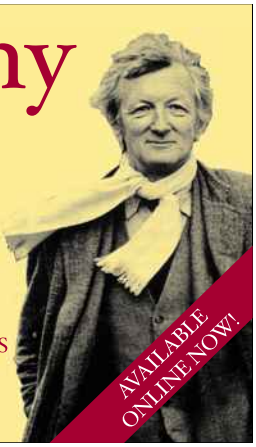
www.britishdowsers.org 01684 576969

THE WORLD OF STRANGE PHENOMENA
ForteanTimes

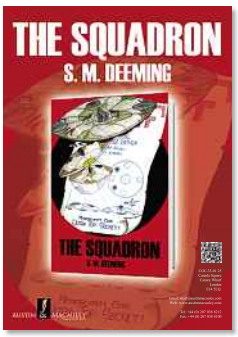
Michellany

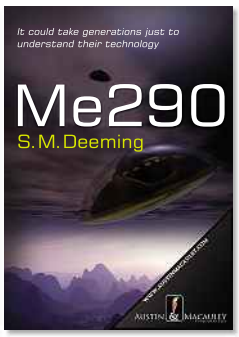
A John Michell Reader

A few copies now available to FT readers • Contributors include FT founder Bob Rickard & Rupert Sheldrake • Numbered memorial volume for family & friends • New material about the celebrated author of *A View Over Atlantis* & *Flying Saucer Vision*



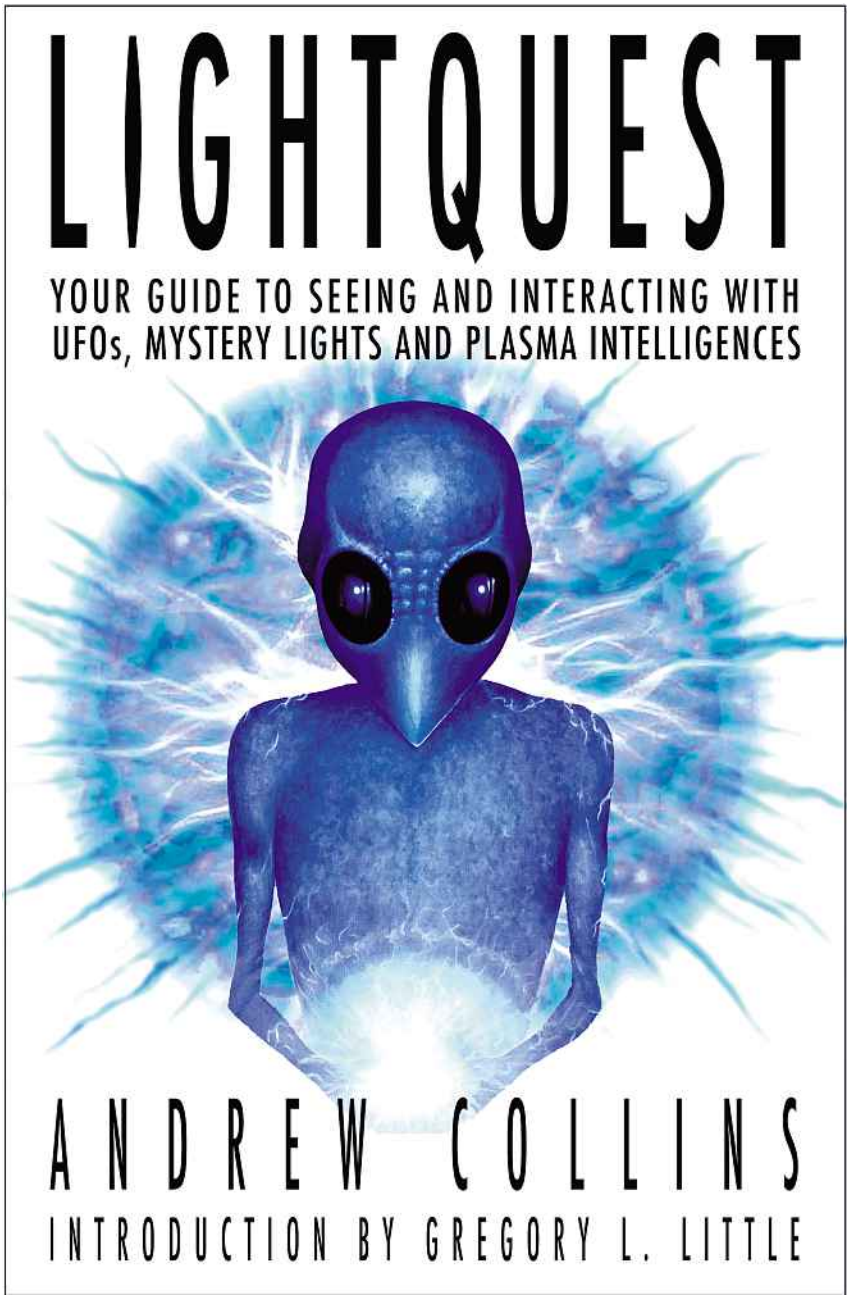
NOT AVAILABLE IN BOOKSHOPS
Send name & address to:
michellany@johnmichell.com
www.johnmichell.com





Read S.M.Deeming's new 'Me290' science fiction series including the latest instalment - 'The Squadron' available to order/reserve on Amazon and Kindle. For more information go to: www.smdeeming.co.uk

A NEW WAY TO EMBRACE THE UFO PHENOMENON


LIGHTQUEST
YOUR GUIDE TO SEEING AND INTERACTING WITH UFOs, MYSTERY LIGHTS AND PLASMA INTELLIGENCES
ANDREW COLLINS
INTRODUCTION BY GREGORY L. LITTLE

LightQuest by Andrew Collins is a new concept in seeing and interacting with the UFO phenomenon. It sees the phenomena observed as the product of sentient light forms and light intelligences that co-exist with humanity, and have done since time immemorial. It reveals what they are, how to see them, where to see them and what to do if you do see them.

Evidence now points to UFOs, mystery lights, and alien intelligences being far more exotic than ever imagined. They can be seen as sentient energy forms and complex plasma constructs — manifestations of a higher dimensional reality, seen in the past as the Realm of Faerie and now as alien hardware.

LightQuest shows that the UFO phenomenon is deeply rooted in everything from quantum entanglement to multi-dimensional experiences, strange worlds that interpenetrate our own and even psychic communication. Alien abductions and missing time episodes are described, defined and clearly understood for the first time. The book is also a field guide to some of Britain and the United States' top UFO hotspots, including:

USA - Roswell, New Mexico; Piedmont. Missouri; Marfa, Texas; Allagash, Maine; Brown Mountain, North Carolina; Indian Head Rock, New Hampshire; Yakima/Mt. Adams, Washington State

UK - Avebury, Alton Barnes, Warminster, Aveley, Peak District, and Rendlesham.

PRICE: £14.99. 415 pages. Guidebook format with textured cover. Heavily illustrated throughout with numerous maps, photos and illustrations including an 8-page 24-colour photo insert. Full index. With an introduction by Gregory L. Little

LightQuest is available now from Amazon, Ebay, & Alibris

Signed copies from the author at www.andrewcollins.com

Also available from the following bookshops: Henge Shop, Avebury; White Horse Bookshop, Marlborough; The Barge, Honeystreet; Labyrinth Books, Glastonbury; Happy Glastonbury, Glastonbury; Gothic Image, Glastonbury; Speaking Tree, Glastonbury; Watkins Bookshop, London; Atlantis Bookshop, London; Mysteries, London

CONTACT US BY POST: **BOX 2409 LONDON NW5 4NP**
OR E-MAIL **sieveking@forteanimes.com**
PLEASE PROVIDE US WITH YOUR POSTAL ADDRESS

Dear FT...

letters

Dream woman

I don't believe that Antonio Villas Boas was intentionally lying [with his story of being seduced by a naked alien in 1957 – **FT296:32**], but there are two aspects of his life that need comment. He was a farmer's son who became a lawyer. Was he perhaps always an outsider? As a child seen as a 'swot' and 'lah-di-dah' by other farmers' sons who didn't have his intellectual interests? As a lawyer seen as bucolic, a yokel, by city-bred lawyers?

What about the strange female he believed he met? Blonde head hair and red pubic hair – is that combination likely? But would a man of Spanish ancestry – living among other Hispanics and Amerindians – ever have seen blondes or redheads except in the cinema or on television? Isn't she a sexual fantasy? *Or* of course (and this is far more interesting as an explanation) a figure mocked up by 'entities' who could telepathically read his fantasies?

David Gamon
By email

Living sky critters

Regarding the idea that UFOs could be living creatures ["The sky is alive" by Scott Deschaine, **FT291:30-35**], I came across the following snippet in *The UFO Encyclopedia* (1991) by John Spencer. In 1947, a Mr John Philip Bessor is quoted as saying: "[Flying saucers are] various species of… life forms or craft propelled by telekinetic energy. Possibly originating in the ionosphere, they have been forced to migrate to denser atmosphere periodically because of solar or cosmic disturbances. They are capable of changing shape in flight and possess the intelligence of the octopus, porpoise or chimpanzee." [page 50]

• I am slightly puzzled by the account of the young lad who claimed to have been to heaven, with the apparent support of the Church, evangelical Christians and the like ["Tourists in Paradise", **FT291:40-44**]. According to the Bible, "no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." [John 3:13]. This seems plain to me: Jesus is telling us that no one here on Earth has ever been there except him. It seems difficult to square this scripture with ordinary people saying they've been there.

Bill Robinson
Slough, Berkshire

The Grafton Crocodile

Was the Mystery Crocodile of Grafton, New South Wales [**FT291:28-29**], really a goanna [Australian monitor lizard]? In the 1990s my husband and I were hiking in the Dorrigo National Park, which is about 60km (37 miles) south of Grafton but at a higher elevation. We were confronted by a goanna that could well have been mistaken for a crocodile, being little short of 8ft (2.4m) long; its abdomen would have been 12in (30cm) across. We watched it saunter across the path ahead of us and vanish into mist. If this animal had been beside water, I would have thought crocodile too.

V Rose-Jones
Coffs Harbour, New South Wales

Phantom islands

The report on the sighting of a 300 by 30 mile (483 x 48km) pumice raft in the South Pacific [**FT295:14**] presumably provides an explanation for the supposed existence of the Maria-Theresa, Jupiter, Wachusett and Ernest Legouve Reefs – all seen from passing ships in the 19th century, but not located subsequently. How many more "phantom islands" of this type might have a similar explanation?

Simon Matthews
By email

Ancient villainy

Reading the report on "vampire burials" ["Undead Reckoning", **FT291:20**], and the manner in which the burials were found, made me wonder whether any evidence for elaborate and cruel mob-style killings exists from before popular culture identified them as such. I can't recall any historical literature ever floating this as a competing hypothesis. Not withstanding that some burials may have substantial evidence to support specific rituals, it seems that any cruel or unusual ways of burial are by default attributed to a significant cultural/religious sacrifice, belief, or ritual.

However, if we accept that cruelty, sadism, vindictiveness, mental instability, or the urge "to send a message of alpha dominance" are not recent developments in mankind, couldn't some burials be attributable to nothing more than cruel, dominant, glory killings? I suspect this may be hard to prove, as the nature of those activities wouldn't lend themselves to preserving typical streams of evidence. Moreover, it's a difficult scenario to accept, as we prefer our ancestors to be deep thinkers on spiritual, purposeful quests rather than murderers. Both traits are likely to have existed, as they do now, and we may default just a little too easily to the former.

Alec Barney Page
Chellaston, Derby

A Fifties perspective

In a recent visit to a charity shop I found a copy of *The Flying Saucers Are Real* by Donald Keyhoe (Dell US, 1950) for 10p. I remember reading, in my pre-teen days, *Flying Saucers and the Three Men* (1962) by Albert K Bender, and guessed this would have the same tone. I was surprised to find it was more like an *X-Files* novel. Most heartening was the realisation that early on, UFOs were perceived not so much as a threat or extraterrestrial, but as achievable technology from 'the other side' – even if that 'other side' proved to be the Brits (honestly, that thought is entertained within the text). There were concerted efforts to bring down a UFO, to do "practically anything within reason" to down one. Oh, and there is not the slightest hint of the Roswell crash – barely two years after it 'happened' and when all this effort was being made to solve the mystery. Hmmm…

Alan Gardiner
Burgess Hill, West Sussex

Myths dissected

In *Fortean Times* 296 I enjoyed Peter Brookesmith's '50 Shades of Grey' and Jenny Randles's relevant question, "Where have all the car stops gone?" I also found 'Aleister Crowley's Art From The Abbey' very interesting. When I initially started buying and then subscribing to *FT*, I particularly enjoyed articles that dissected popular myths – such as those concerning alien implants, toads in stone and the Golem of Prague. When the analysis is well done, it is thoroughly engaging and this was the case with Peter Brookesmith's article. More please.

Jameel Siddiq
Walthamstow, London

Spooky bath bombs

My five-year-old daughter Abigail, who often flicks through my copies of *Fortean Times*, saw a picture of the Hexham Heads [**FT294:42-47**] and called them "spooky bath bombs" – referring, of course, to the products of a popular handmade cosmetic company.

I thought you might be amused.

Simon Besson
By email

JODORO

Narcissus was exhausted after blogging, tweeting and updating Facebook.

letters

Sandhill crane?

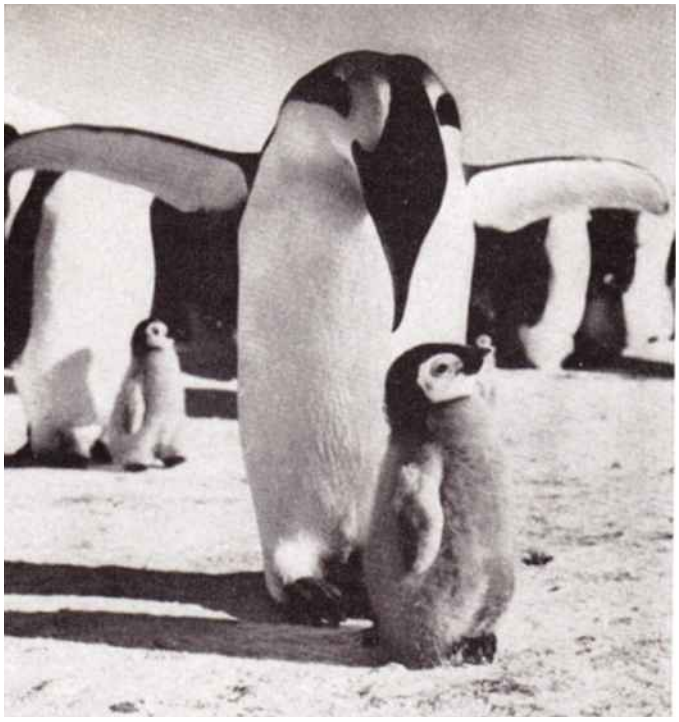
Mothman, one of the most celebrated of paranormal entities, terrorised Point Pleasant, West Virginia, beginning in November 1966. Mothman's disappearance coincided with the collapse of the Silver Bridge over the Ohio River on 15 December 1967, when 46 people lost their lives. John Keel's interest in Mothman led to his book *The Mothman Prophecies*, which became a major motion picture.

During the year of 'high strangeness' in the Point Pleasant community, a West Virginia University biologist suggested witnesses had seen a sandhill crane. But the more than 100 witnesses that claimed they saw the creature stood by their stories as they described a winged, headless phantom that had a shuffling walk and two huge red eyes that shone like bicycle reflectors.

Cryptozoologist Ivan T Sanderson investigated a 14ft (4.3m) penguin that was allegedly sighted on a Florida beach back in the Fifties. In Jerome Clarke's *Unexplained*, Sanderson suggested that the White River Monster of Newport, Arkansas – affectionately named 'Whitey' – might have been 'a truly gigantic penguin'. Although Sanderson's penguin theory may seem far-fetched, a penguin does figure in the sandhill crane theory suggested by West Virginia University biologist Robert Smith.

The artists' renderings of The Mothman Monster always filled me with a feeling of déjà vu. The winged, headless form with red eyes is not a recognisable image one would likely see, unless, of course, one was living in Point Pleasant during the years 1966-1967… Yet in the back of my mind I knew I had seen something similar in the past.

During the moving process in September 2011 as I was unpacking the set of *World Book Encyclopedias* my mother had purchased for me in 1965, I remembered something. Opening the volume to the article on penguins, I found this enigmatic photo that had baffled me for so many years. An emperor penguin with two huge 'eyes' and no head was once again staring at me from the page.



For the first time, I took a closer look and finally realised that the mother penguin was bending over to inspect her chick, causing the markings on her back to appear as 'eyes'.

Comparing the penguin photo to the Mothman rendering made me realise that this character from the Goblin Universe was most likely a sandhill crane as suggested at the beginning of the Mothman Scare. During the 15 years that I worked for a timeshare resort near Walt Disney World in Kissimmee, Florida, I became familiar with these birds. Male sandhill cranes can attain a height of more than 6ft (1.8m). Bright red patches surrounding their eyes offset their grey plumage, which prompted at least one Point Pleasant witness to describe 'a big grey thing'. The red heads of the birds reflected in my headlights one night while attending the resort's Christmas party elicited startled remarks from me and my passenger even though neither of us had ever heard about Mothman at that time.

The year of 'high strangeness' in Point Pleasant began on a November night in 1966 when two couples were joyriding through an abandoned munitions plant and saw a winged, headless creature 'shuffling' through the darkness. Would the Mothman Scare ever have occurred if these two couples hadn't been at that particular place at the time? If those four people had never observed the 'thing' that frightened them, would this chapter be missing from paranormal literature?

I believe that Mothman was not a paranormal entity but a classic example of mass hysteria that gripped this West Virginia community. Four frightened adults excitedly told their story to law enforcement officials resulting in a newspaper article that appeared the next day, prompting others to come forward with their own stories of seeing the 'creature'. An entire community subsequently believed that an 'otherworldly' creature had taken up residence in their town.

Greg May
Orlando, Florida

The Power Of Pluto

Do any readers remember a reference in their childhood literature to the Power of Pluto – or am I imagining it? I recall that in the late 1960s when I was about seven, a friend read to me from a children's magazine about strange, small area atmospheric disturbances being attributed to "the Power Of Pluto" (my capitalisation but I feel it deserves it). The disturbances included pressure changes but also people feeling trapped in amber and problems breathing. The text, which again I have no memory of actually seeing, was in the form of a letter to the editor describing events and the editor's response was something along the lines of "you have experienced the Power of Pluto". I am not suggesting that this was a real experience of somebody as we were both obsessed with Sci Fi – *Doctor Who* and *Dan Dare* – but my friend (whom I lost touch with decades ago) also had limited access to books and periodicals containing forteana and ufology.

Jim Wyatt-Lees
West Bromwich

Car snooker

Inanna Arthen [**FT289:70**] doubts that red cars are more likely to be pulled over by traffic cops – but this might sometimes be the case in the UK. When my neighbour's children were young I would walk with them into town. To liven up the walk home we sometimes played car snooker. Whoever spotted a red car first scored a point and then embarked on a break, looking out for any snooker ball coloured car. If they were first to spot such a car they earned the appropriate number of points and returned to looking for a red car. If another player spotted the required coloured car first, the break came to an end and we all waited for the next red car to come along.

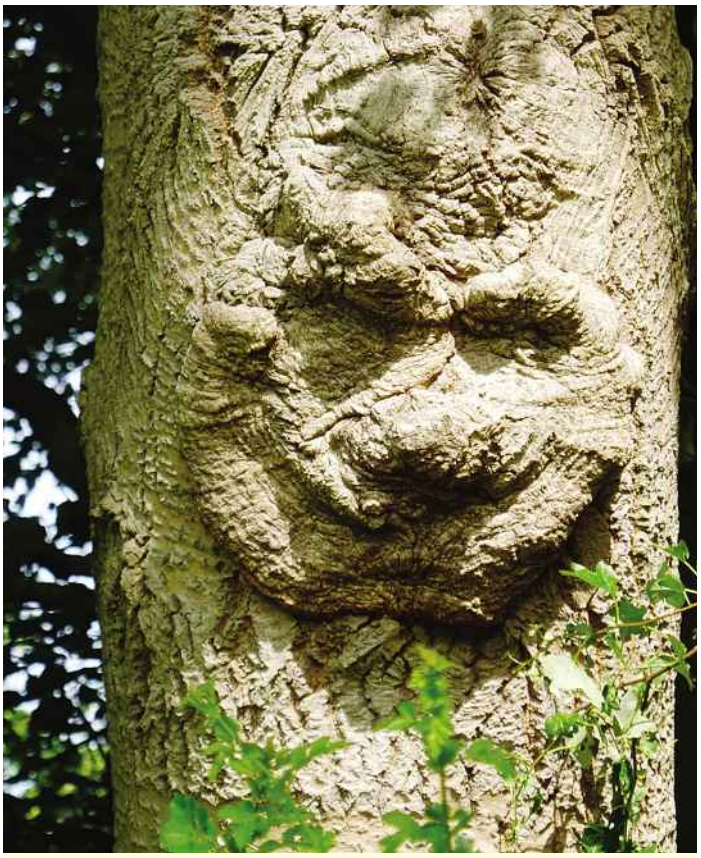
Some time later I heard about a court case during which it was revealed that bored traffic cops were playing this very game, but pulling over the unlucky car rather than just scoring the points. A storm in a teacup began to brew and a senior police officer was dragged in and asked if he approved of this behaviour by his officers. This was in the days before high-ranking cops had to spend their time apologising for everything they did and the senior officer said that he didn't much care how his officers did the job so long as it got done. Of course the rules of car snooker did mean that more red cars would get pulled over...

Bob Smith
Maidstone, Kent

SIMULACRA CORNER

We are always glad to receive pictures of spontaneous forms and figures, or any curious images.
Send them (with your postal address) to Fortean Times, PO Box 2409, London NW5 4NP or to sieveking@forteantimes.com.

Mark of Cube Studios spotted this wooden bottom very near Oulton Park Racetrack in Cheshire on 25 June 2011.



James Hutchinson sent us this amusing tree face in June 2012, but we have lost his contact details. If you see this, Mr Hutchinson, please get in touch.

ABOVE: Jayne Thompson spotted this figure made from the branches and leaves of an ivy-covered oak tree while travelling near to Rozel in Jersey. "It's reminiscent of a heroic figure making a proclamation to the gods while its oversized cloak is swept out behind it in the wind," she said.

RIGHT: This green man – or perhaps vineman – was spotted by Nancy Wisser out on a walk in Pennsylvania in July 2012. "Maybe nature's backlash has begun," she muses.

it happened to me...

First-hand accounts from *FT* readers and browsers of www.forteantimes.com

The Awakening

As a member of a Native tribe in the interior of Alaska, I've witnessed many inexplicable events. This one happened in the fall of 1996.

Ike Hobson fired two shots across the small, oblong lake. It was at least 150 yards (137m) to the other side. The shots roared in the cup of the frosted valley, frightening a flock of small birds that suddenly lifted from a leafless tree and flew away over the hill.

"What are you shooting at?" I asked, squinting to see the distant shore.

"That caribou standing on the sand bar. Right there," he said pointing.

My eyes followed his pointing finger. "There's nothing there – you must have missed."

But Ike worked the bolt, shoving another cartridge into the chamber. He brought the butt of the rifle to his shoulder, aimed carefully, and fired again. I looked through my rifle scope across the water.

"What are you shooting at?" I demanded, my voice growing angry and impatient.

"That big bull standing right there. Can't you see it? Look at the size of its rack," he said, his head moving slightly left as if he were following something moving on the other side. "Damn it. There he goes. Damn. He got away."

I looked through my scope once more, then turned to my cousin.

"There wasn't nothing there, Ike."

"It was right there, standing on the shore by that tree. You had to see it!"

We stood arguing as the sun set over the hill. It would be dark soon.

"There was nothing there," I said for the fifth or sixth time. "You were shooting at nothing."

But Ike stood his ground, certain of what he had seen.

Finally, near darkness, we paddled our small canoe across the lake to where Ike said he had seen the caribou. We walked up and down the shoreline for a while before giving up for the night.

"I don't get it," Ike finally said, puzzled, "it was right here."

The ground was sandy and soft enough that we could see our boot prints, but there were no other tracks of any kind. Nothing had walked across this spot in days or weeks. There had been no caribou. We paddled back across the flat, dark water. That night, our campfire embers glowing outside, we lay in our fluttering tent talking about the caribou.

"I saw it as clearly as I see you right now," Ike whispered. "I'm not joking. I had it dead on in my sights."

Ike slept restlessly, dreaming strange dreams. He awoke often, thinking he heard rustlings outside the tent. A bear maybe. Maybe not, he'd think after listening for a long time, warm in his sleeping bag. It was a long night.

The next morning we packed camp and drove back to the village, stopping at our grandfather's house. He was a traditional chief and a deeply spiritual man. He was born back when Indians still spoke their language, when they remembered the old ways, before things changed forever. He was standing outside wearing a baseball cap and a thick red flannel shirt with suspenders, changing a tyre on his car. We gave him a hand. Ike told the story of the previous evening, how he had seen the caribou, shot at it. I told how I had seen nothing and how there were no tracks anywhere.

"It was like it wasn't there at all," Ike said, dumbfounded.

Grandpa sat down stiffly on a rusty 55-gallon metal barrel turned on its side. There were dozens of them scattered around the field like wild flowers. At the far edge of the field near the tree line, abandoned cars decayed slowly, becoming homes for small animals. He looked at Ike for a long time before he spoke.

> "When an animal dies – be it fox, beaver, moose, bear or caribou – its spirit stays in this world"

DEA / G. CAPPELLI / GETTY IMAGES

"That's because it wasn't really there," he said slowly, the way elders always spoke. "You saw the spirit of a caribou. You saw its ghost. When an animal dies – be it fox, beaver, moose, grizzly bear, or caribou – its spirit stays in this world. This is heaven to them. They still walk around doing the same things they always did. They don't know they're dead. But people can't see them. They exist only in the spirit world. They are all around us, even now, here in this field, in those trees on the hillside. Even the spirits of salmon swim the rivers, following their cousins and children as they spawn each summer. Only a shaman can see them."

Ike knelt close as the old chief continued.

"When you were born, we knew that you would be a shaman one day. When the local priest came down to the village to baptise you, your nose started bleeding when the water touched you. All the elders remember that day. But no one can tell when it will begin. Sometimes it doesn't happen until one is old and is willing to see the world of the dead. Sometimes it happens too soon, when one is unwilling to believe one's own eyes. The knowledge can use up a weak man. We knew that you would see what you must see when it was time. There was no reason to tell you while you were so young. We knew that one day you would come to us."

We walked the old chief into his house, carrying in two five-gallon jugs of drinking water, and left. We drove down to fish camp, an open area along the great, silty river where our families spent several weeks each summer catching salmon to hang and dry in the sun and wind. The river was low. This late in the fall, glaciers didn't melt and rivers began to shrink.

We built a campfire, rolled two tree stumps close to sit on, and sat a six-pack of beer between us. We didn't talk for a long time, but stared into the fire and out across the river towards the great white mountains in the distance. They were so tall that snow never melted from them; it is said that the spirits of our ancestors go there, and that the wisps of smoke rising from

volcanic vents are the campfires of the dead.

"I have to tell you something," I said, breaking the silence.

Ike turned away from the spell of the fire, holding his beer can gently between two hands nestled in his lap.

"When I was 14, I was hunting grouse and rabbit up in the hills behind my father's winter cabin. It had been snowing hard for a long time. I got up one morning and hiked all the way up the hill in snowshoes. I must have shot five or six grouse and a couple rabbits, I think. I don't really remember. On the way back I saw a moose, the biggest I had ever seen. The snow was so deep that it had a hard time moving. I remember thinking it would be an easy meal for wolves. I don't know why, but I started chasing it. I wasn't going to shoot it or anything – I was just having fun. I remember it as clearly as I see you sitting there. It was running, stumbling in the deep snow. I can still see it in my mind – its rising breath, its eyes wide and white in fear, its muscles moving under its hide. I kept chasing it, laughing and out of breath. Little by little, it got further away until it finally reached the timberline and vanished. I stood in the deep field catching my breath, listening to the wind and the cold silence. I took off my hat and gloves to cool down. I even unzipped my parka."

Ike looked at me, staring into the fire, a tear rolling down his face. He didn't understand why he was crying.

"I remember I turned around and started back for the cabin when it dawned on me that there were only my tracks in the fresh snow. I walked all around looking for that moose's tracks. I looked for so long that the sun went away and I was left alone in the darkness. I never found a single track, only mine. I didn't know what to make of it. I've never told anyone about it until now."

As the red Sun set over the far white mountains and darkness cast long shadows in the quiet forest, we sat beside the dying embers of the fire smiling in amazement as stars began to shine and the indifferent spirits of animals began to walk around us, beside us, through us – while the cold night began to sleep and dream of summer.

John E Smelcer
By email

Birthday greeting

I had a dream about my boyfriend three days after he died. In the dream he was washing my hair in the bath and telling me he was fine and not to worry. I was a lot calmer by the time of the funeral. The night of the funeral, I dreamt I was at his parents' house looking through photographs. The phone was ringing and I figured it was for me as his parents seemed oblivious to it. I answered and the voice, which sounded like my boyfriend's, said: "Hello kiddo". I wanted to check it wasn't wishful thinking so asked "Where are you?" He replied "China". "What are you doing there? It's the other side of the world." He said that he had joined an all girl band and was the lead singer. I called him a few choice words for having fun whilst we where all here missing him so much then asked: "Can't I come and see you?" He said no, it's not your time. I asked if he could come and see me but he said "No, you know I can't do that, but I'll be here for you and I'll wait for you. Anytime you need me, just call."

Two years later I received a call out of the blue from his mother. She wanted to know if it was OK to come along to a pagan moot I ran, as we always before this time managed to end up in tears whenever we saw each other. I said I was looking forward to seeing her and with that she then asked what I had been up to. I told her that it had been my birthday the day before and with that she went quite quiet. She then told me she had been to see a clairvoyant and had a message saying: "Tell her happy birthday kiddo". She had not known of anyone with a birthday on that date.

Now that is quite impressive, when a boyfriend from beyond the grave can remember your birthday!

Lynsey Drewitt
Norwich, Norfolk

Cross Appears

In late December 1981, I was working the night shift as a cook in a restaurant in Saskatoon, Canada. My sister in Ontario had called me a few days previously to notify me that our mother was gravely ill. I took a call that night and she told me that our mother had just passed on. This bad news was compounded by the fact my common law partner at the time, and baby son, had moved out – into the arms of her new man. My boss sent me home, with several mostly empty bottles of booze he scavenged from the bar – his way of offering condolences. I took the bus home, and so there I was, walking down the street toward my house on a freezing cold prairie night, at the lowest point in my life, sober as a judge, liquor bottles tinkling in a garbage bag, heading to an empty home, passing houses with cheerful decorations and Christmas trees visible through the windows, with only the thought of drowning my sorrows to keep me going. I felt like the saddest Santa of all time. As I passed by one house, I couldn't help but notice a large glowing cross on the living room wall, visible through the front window. I had to stop to take another look. I thought it was a bit unusual for a Christmas decoration, but I soldiered on. I was unable to get to the funeral, being flat broke and with airfares sky high at the time, and no such thing as compassionate leave from my employer.

A couple of nights later I was walking home again along the same route when I passed the house that had had the cross, but now it was wasn't there. I rang the bell. A nice older lady answered, and I inquired about the beautiful cross decoration and why it wasn't lit. She said she had no such decoration, and nothing on the wall, and she allowed me into the hall to see for myself. I apologised for the intrusion and went home.

That's when it hit me. I remembered a conversation I had had with my mother many years previously. We are Roman Catholic, and sometimes discussed spiritual matters. During one conversation we were discussing life after death. She assured me that since she would most probably die before me, she would give a sign. Since she didn't want to 'spook me', she said that she would just show me a cross. I firmly believe that at my darkest hour, she sent me a sign to say she was still there for me.

Barry Countway
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Inner Voices

I would like to let Carly Stevens [**FT290:72**] know that she isn't alone. Both my mother and I have experienced similar 'inner voices'. I would describe the noise I hear as a single persistent, loud, angry voice, with many other voices in the background. The louder voice sounds as though it is male, but I'm not sure, and it is definitely arguing or telling someone off, although not me specifically. I can't make out any words, or even syllables. It doesn't sound like a different language, just muffled conversation. The overall effect is rather overwhelming. I usually get it when I am ill or very tired. When I was younger it used to scare me, but now it is just a distraction. If I try to concentrate on it, it fades away, and comes back again when I start doing something else. It can sometimes make it hard to have a conversation, read or write. If I listen to music it goes away.

My mother describes it as being similar to the general conversation you might hear in a restaurant, and she can pick out the occasional word. Sometimes there is a voice aimed directly at her. She can't relate the occurrence to anything specific; it happens randomly for her. She says that it will go away if she does something that requires a lot of concentration. My late grandmother on my mother's side also used to get this, and my younger sister does too, very rarely, so maybe it is a genetic thing. Or perhaps it is just a reaction to being tired, ill, or stressed. Or perhaps we are all loopy!

Megan P Lennox
By email

NOW ON SALE!

IT HAPPENED TO ME! VOLUME 5

The latest collection of first-hand accounts of high strangeness from the pages of *Fortean Times* includes tales of dog-headed men, haunted hotels, disappearing buidlings and much, much more. Now available from WH Smith and Amazon.co.uk

It Happened To Me!
REAL-LIFE TALES OF THE PARANORMAL
VOLUME 5
Ordinary people's extraordinary true stories from the pages of
Fortean Times

FORTEAN TRAVELLER

83. The Enigma of Çatalhöyük

DR ROBERT M SCHOCH suggests the lost civilisation of Çatalhöyük in Turkey offers evidence of cataclysmic events at the end of the last Ice Age

On the Anatolian plain of modern Turkey, southeast of the city of Konya, a couple of large and rather nondescript hills sit surrounded by fields. For seven millennia these mounds held a secret – buried within them are the material remains of a large and complex community dating back to the Neolithic (New Stone Age) and Chalcolithic (Copper Age, transitional between the New Stone Age and the Bronze Age). Çatalhöyük (spelled various ways, such as Çatal Höyük or Çatal Hüyük; the name is not ancient and in Turkish it means something along the lines of "fork mound", possibly referring to the road which at this point divides into several directions) The site was occupied for over 2,000 years and covers some 13.75 hectares (34 acres), although only a fraction of this has been excavated. It may have been home to a population of 3,500 to 8,000 people at any one time. There are two major mounds. The East Mound dates back to circa 7500 or 7400 BC and due to repeated occupation and the building of new structures upon older ones rose to a height of 21m (69ft). The West Mound dates back to circa 6200 BC and may have been originally settled due to overpopulation of the East Mound. The site was continuously occupied until about 5400 or 5200 BC.

Çatalhöyük consists of numerous buildings constructed adjacent to each other with their walls abutting. There was little in the way of open areas or streets between the buildings, and few windows. The dense collection of buildings presented a solid wall around the perimeter, reminiscent of a later fortified castle or city. The houses had flat mud-brick roofs on which many daily activities were carried out: cooking, eating, and socialising. Indeed, the rooftops may have served as paths and streets from one dwelling to another. Entrances to the buildings consisted of small openings at the tops of the walls (ladders and steps were used to reach them from the ground) and through the roofs. The inhabitants were packed tightly into homes, with an estimated five to 10 people typically occupying a space ranging from about 3-4m (10-13ft) by 4-6m (13-20ft). There was a large room for living, eating, and sleeping and side rooms for storage.

DR ROBERT M SCHOCH

BELOW: An overview of the excavations at Çatalhöyük

But this was not just a city for the living. Over 400 skeletons have been found buried under the plaster floors, particularly under platforms used as sleeping areas. One house had over 60 skeletons buried beneath it! In 2004 a woman was found buried in a fœtal position cradling against her chest a human skull that had been plastered and painted with red pigments on at least three separate occasions before being interred with her. Was this some form of "ancestor worship"? Were the dead, in some cases, given status on a par with the living?

Çatalhöyük was a city of mud-brick and plaster, not monumental stone structures. It was a city with murals and paintings covering the interiors of many houses. Depicted are men hunting wild deer and cattle, vultures flying over headless people (perhaps a death ritual?), female figures, and many abstract designs. Also found are paintings and bas-reliefs of leopards sculpted into the plaster walls. Clay figurines of animals, human heads, and possibly the "Mother Goddess" (this interpretation is subject to debate) were sculpted, and bull's skulls (bucrania) with prominent horns were plastered and mounted into walls, benches, and pillars. Was this a form of bull cult? In at least one case the bucrania surround a burial spot inside a home; some speculate that the bulls served to protect the deceased. Çatalhöyük is a place that, arguably, was dominated by art and symbols. Ian Hodder, a Stanford University archæologist and director of the Çatalhöyük excavations since 1993, has suggested that the people of Çatalhöyük located their city at a place that was optimal in terms of their pursuit of artistic and spiritual expression, not for pragmatic reasons of food production, protection, or commerce (although they may have been traders of the high-quality obsidian – volcanic glass used to produce knives, jewelry, and other objects – found in the area). The Çatalhöyük residents hunted wild game, herded sheep and goats, and cultivated wheat, barley, peas, and various legumes. However, their fields appear to have been located 11km (7 miles) or more from the city, which was, of all places, located in the middle of marshlands. Why? Some might argue for protection, but Hodder thinks differently. He believes their city was located in a spot where the clays they used to build and plaster their homes were easily accessible. These

ALL PHOTOS: DR ROBERT M SCHOCH

ABOVE LEFT: Bull skulls found at Çatalhöyük.

ABOVE RIGHT: Replica of the 'Mother Goddess' figure found at Çatalhöyük.

LEFT: Reconstruction leopard wall bas-reliefs at Çatalhöyük.

were a necessary component of their symbolic and artistic expression; plaster walls were the canvases for murals, and clay was used to sculpt figurines and encase bull's skulls as well as those of the departed ancestors. It would have been extremely difficult to transport large quantities of clay long distances from the marshlands; the solution was to settle where the clays were found in abundance. Art came first in the minds of these ancient people.

ÇATALHÖYÜK VERSUS GÖBEKLI TEPE

But is this a correct interpretation of the fundamental nature of Çatalhöyük? And was it really so advanced?

Two thousand years earlier, approximately 600 kilometres east of Çatalhöyük, the people of Göbekli Tepe (located near modern Sanliurfa, Turkey) demonstrate the attributes of sophisticated culture and true civilisation. At Göbekli Tepe, immense finely carved T-shaped limestone pillars, many between two to five and a half metres tall and weighing up to an estimated 10-15 tons, form Stonehenge-like circles. Various pillars at Göbekli Tepe are decorated with bas-reliefs of animals, including foxes, boars, snakes, aurochs, birds, and arthropods (a scorpion, ants and/or spiders). The level of sophistication seen at Göbekli Tepe clearly, in my opinion, indicates that high civilisation existed here. What is really amazing is the age of Göbekli Tepe. Based on radiocarbon techniques and geological studies, the site dates back an astounding 12,000 to 10,000 years.

This civilisation collapsed at the end of the last Ice Age

Four of the circles at Göbekli Tepe were aligned to the region of the sky containing Orion, Taurus, and the Pleiades on the morning of the Vernal Equinox. Due to precession of the equinoxes, such orientations change over time, with the entire cycle taking close to 26,000 years. The builders of Göbekli Tepe took such changes into account, reorienting their structures between the years 10,000 BC to 8000 BC, indicative of an added level of sophistication: a scientific orientation. Then suddenly, circa 8000 BC, the people of Göbekli Tepe disappeared – but first, they intentionally buried the site. Why? Were they attempting to protect it, either so that they might some day return, or so it would be preserved for future generations?

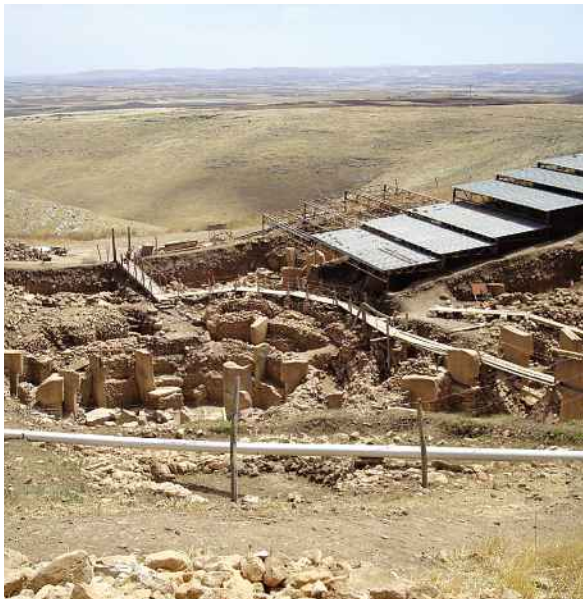
In my judgment the site of Göbekli Tepe shows all the signs of being "more advanced" than Çatalhöyük. It is as if Çatalhöyük represents a decline from the higher civilisation of Göbekli Tepe, a relative cultural dark age thousands of years later. What happened?

CIVILIZATION AT THE END OF THE LAST ICE AGE

Göbekli Tepe straddles the end of the last Ice Age, which came to a close circa 9700 BC. This early flowering of civilisation collapsed during the end of the last Ice Age when Earth experienced cataclysmic changes. Something very sudden and very unusual took place, unlike anything we have experienced since. The peoples and cultures of that remote time were utterly devastated. Knowledge was lost, order devolved to chaos, and a dark age lasting thousands of years ensued.

The end of the last Ice Age was not simply a matter of the climate warming and glaciers melting. Earth experienced a series of climatic fluctuations. It had been extremely cold, with continental glaciers extending much further than they do today, but the climate started to warm. However, temperatures reverted back and there was a short cold spell, known as the Younger Dryas, before the final warming and the official end of the last Ice Age. Studying Greenland ice core data, scientists have determined that the Younger Dryas began and ended very abruptly. Its start dates to circa 10,900 BC, and its ending (the final warming) began circa 9700 BC and may have occurred within an incredible three years; given our inability to resolve the finest details of something that happened so long ago, it may have happened almost overnight.

How do we explain this pattern of abrupt climatic shifts? I once hypothesised that comets were responsible. A comet hitting the land or a shallow ocean, or exploding above the land's surface, scattering dust and debris into the atmosphere, would cause global cooling. Although the initial strike would happen in a flash, it would take some years for the cooling to reach its full extent. This pattern fits well with the cooling at 10,900 BC and evidence, albeit still controversial, of a comet explosion over North America at this time has been found.



BOTH PHOTOS: DR ROBERT M SCHOCH

ABOVE LEFT: Göbekli Tepe. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Pillars at Göbekli Tepe decorated with birds and other animals. For the idea that Gobekli Tepe could be the site of the Garden of Eden, see "Paradise Regained?" by Sean Thomas (**FT220:46-51**). See also **FT289:23**.

What about the warming event of 9700 BC? I believe the answer is right before our eyes: our Sun!

Despite popular misconceptions, the Sun is not a stable, unchanging, eternal ball of fire in the sky. Indeed, from an astrophysical and geological perspective, the Sun is quite the opposite. It is unstable, continually seething and churning, in disequilibrium, discharging not only visible light but also a large energy array across the electromagnetic spectrum, and belting out charged particles as well. While the Sun may have little hiccups from time to time, it can also suffer from major bouts of coughing, spewing massive "solar storms" Earth's way. Such storms, thousands of times more powerful than anything recorded in modern times, have left their marks in prehistoric records.

When discussing solar outbursts we need to consider plasma. Sometimes referred to as the fourth state of matter, plasma consists of electrically charged particles. Familiar plasma phenomena on Earth today include lightning and auroras, the northern and southern lights, as well as large-scale upper atmospheric phenomena known as sprites. In the past, much more powerful plasma events sometimes took place, due to major solar outbursts (including what are known as coronal mass ejections). Solar outbursts creating powerful plasma phenomena would cause strong electrical discharges to hit Earth, burning and incinerating materials on our planet's surface, melting glaciers, and causing water to evaporate and then precipitate as torrential rains. Is this the origin of stories from around the world recounting catastrophic rains and floods, such as Noah's flood? At higher latitudes the melting of ice sheets kilometres thick would release pressure on the crust and cause increased catastrophic earthquake and volcanic activity resonating around the globe.

THE DARK AGE OF ÇATALHÖYÜK

The Ice Age civilisations were thrown into a tailspin and a dark age ensued. We see evidence at Çatalhöyük and similar sites, such as the geographically close and approximately contemporaneous Asiklihöyük, which yielded an incredible obsidian bracelet. Found in a context that dates to c. 7500 BC, it presents an enigma. Based on modern laboratory analyses, it was made using highly specialised techniques that seem out of place for such an early period. I wonder if this bracelet might be even older – perhaps an antique, a remembrance of an earlier and more sophisticated time thousands of years earlier, handed down from generation to generation.

Many different interpretations of Çatalhöyük have been proposed; however, none are universally accepted. Was the central theme of the city life, death, and renewal? Is this why the dead were buried below the quarters of the living? Were the female statuettes representative of the primordial Mother Goddess, a fertility figure (like Cybele or Demeter, thousands of years later)? Or were they simply an æsthetic expression of their creators? And what about the bucrania? Were these masculine symbols of strength, power, and protection? Or, as Marija Gimbutas suggested (in *The Language of the Goddess*, 1989), did a bucranium represent a woman's reproductive organs (the bull's head resembling the uterus and the horns the fallopian tubes)? Thus, the bull was associated with the Mother Goddess as a symbol of birth, rebirth, and regeneration. The tradition carried on, for instance in the symbols of the Egyptian Hathor as well as the those of the crescent Moon and cornucopia, both related to the horns of the bull.

An odd feature of Çatalhöyük is that so far no evidence of public buildings or a central authority has been found. The houses are fairly consistent from one to anther. Did the people simply live in perfect egalitarian harmony with no need for a ruler or social hierarchy? The city plan gives the impression of a honeycomb; could the analogy to a beehive be more than superficial – except that there was no queen bee? Studying Çatalhöyük, I could not help but think of the bicameral mind theory of the late psychologist Julian Jaynes. Jaynes proposed that prior to a few thousand years ago ancient humans did not possess consciousness on the same level or of the same nature as modern humans. Among other characteristics, such persons often experienced auditory hallucinations that they interpreted as the voices of their gods giving commands and directing their actions. Their societies were organised differently from later societies, without the same level of central authority that was required of "fully conscious" individuals. Jaynes (in *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*, 1976) cited Çatalhöyük as an example supporting his hypothesis. Perhaps further afield, I also think of Gurdjieff's concept that many people live their lives in a "waking sleep", a state below full consciousness. And do the famous Sufi whirling dervishes purposefully cultivate different levels of consciousness, including perhaps those that characterised the ancient people of Çatalhöyük? Is it simply coincidental that the Mevlevi Order was founded by the 13th century Persian poet and mystic Rumi in Konya, so close to the very ancient site of Çatalhöyük? Perhaps… but I cannot help but wonder. FT

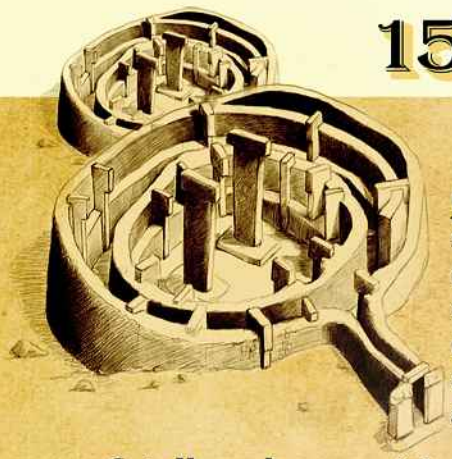
In June 2013 Dr. Schoch will be leading a tour to Turkey, visiting Çatalhöyük, Asiklihöyük, and Göbekli Tepe, as well as many other sites. For information, visit his website: www.robertschoch.com

DR ROBERT M SCHOCH is a faculty member at Boston University and earned his Ph.D in geology and geophysics at Yale. His most recent book is *Forgotten Civilization: The Role of Solar Outbursts in Our Past and Future* (Inner Traditions, 2012).

TURKEY GRAND TOUR
with Dr. Robert M. Schoch, Ph.D.

The Greatest Ancient Wonders of Anatolia -
Adventures Exploring the Beginning of Civilization

Join world-renowned geologist, scholar, and author, Dr. Robert Schoch, on an excursion exploring the archaeology, history, culture, and natural beauty of Turkey – the region rightfully referred to as the "Cradle of Civilization", the original Garden of Eden. Our tour will take us to the roots of humanity as we search for the beginning of civilization. We will explore our true origins and seek the answers to the questions: Who are we ? From where do we come?



15TH–28TH JUNE 2013

Tour Highlights:

Göbekli Tepe - the newly discovered "world's oldest temple", incredibly sophisticated, dating back to the end of the last ice age (12,000 years ago). This is one of the most important and outstanding sites in the world and perhaps the most amazing archeological discovery in modern times. Nobody knows what civilization created it, or why. The construction date of Göbekli Tepe is thousands of years earlier than the traditional dates assigned to other major structures of antiquity, such as Stonehenge in England or the Egyptian Pyramids.

Catalhoyuk - one of the world's earliest cities dating back nearly 10,000 years! It is the largest and best-preserved Neolithic settlement currently known and is considered one of the key sites for understanding human prehistory.

Mount Nemrut - is a world-famous ancient megalithic site and one of the most interesting tourist attractions of Turkey. It is often considered the 8th Wonder of the Ancient World. At the summit of this 2,134 meter high mountain are the ruins of the ancient Commagene Kingdom which was at its height of power during the 1st century B.C. The most remarkable feature of the Mount Nemrut site is the giant stone heads of ancient gods. It is said to be the king's tomb, although no grave has ever been found there. Who really built it and why? How far back might it date? It is still a mystery even today.

Cappadocia - the timeless and fantastic bare rock landscape of valleys and mountains, rock-cut churches, and mysterious ancient underground cities. This region is a geological wonder in its own right, forming a "lost world."

Ephesus - once the most important commercial center of the ancient world, a religious center of early Christianity, and today a unique and amazingly well preserved ancient city that attracts visitors from around the world.

Troy - a city both factual and legendary. It is best known for being the setting of the Trojan War described in Homer's *Iliad*.

Istanbul - one of the greatest cities in the world, capital of the Byzantine Empire.

and much more... !

For more information see: **www.timeofanewera.com**
or contact us by E-mail: **contact@timeofanewera.com**

JAN BONDESON presents more sensational stories and startling Victorian images from the "worst newspaper in England" – the *Illustrated Police News*.

19. THE SCOTTISH GIANT

In my book *The Two-headed Boy, and other Medical Marvels*, later re-issued in the UK as *Freaks*, I described the life and times of Daniel Lambert, a native of Leicester who weighed no less than 52 stone (330kg). When he exhibited himself for money in London in 1806, he was acknowledged as the heaviest man ever seen in Britain. The story of the Leicester colossus has since been regurgitated by several writers, on the Internet and elsewhere, and has also reached Wikipedia. In contrast, much less is known about the first man in Britain to challenge Lambert's weight record, the publican William Campbell, but thanks to the *Illustrated Police News*, I am now able to remedy that state of affairs.

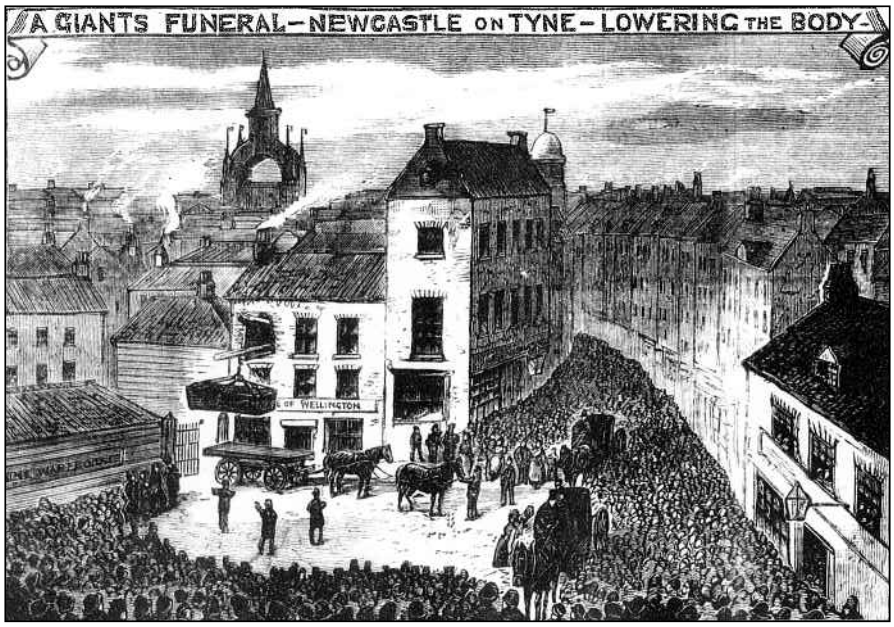
Campbell was born in Glasgow in 1856. His father was tall but of ordinary weight and build; his mother was short and quite thin. He was one of seven siblings. But whereas his brothers and sisters were of normal proportions, William's weight increased in an alarming manner: at the age of just 10, he weighed 18 stone (114kg). He trained to become a printer, but his extreme obesity – upwards of 40 stone (254kg) by his late teens – rendered him incapable of finding paid employment. In September 1875, he married Polly, the daughter of Burnley photographer John Kelly. In November 1877, they took up the lease of the Duke of Wellington public house at High Bridge in Newcastle.

In February 1878, the Newcastle correspondent of the *Lancet* visited Campbell, who was now claiming to be the heaviest man in Britain, weighing more than 52 stone. He was 6ft, 8in (2m) tall, and measured 96in (244cm) round the shoulders, round the waist 85in (216cm), and round the calf 35in (88cm). Although he was not yet 22 years old, his general health was not good; he suffered from a 'cold' and an erysipelatous infection of one of his huge legs. Although he only admitted a 'moderate' consumption of alcoholic beverages, he smoked like a chimney, and his heartbeat was weak and irregular. The Newcastle doctor thought Campbell's occupation and habits were scarcely conducive to health and longevity, although they might increase his weight and popularity.

In March 1878, Campbell went on exhibition at the Egyptian Hall in London as 'Her Majesty's Largest Subject, The Heaviest Man in the World'. The freak-show was open from midday until four in the afternoon, and from seven until nine

ABOVE: William Campbell, the Scottish Giant, from the *Illustrated Police News* of 8 June 1878.

STRATED NEWS
EKLY RECORD



ABOVE LEFT: The wall of the house is demolished to enable the Giant's coffin to be removed. **ABOVE RIGHT:** William Campbell's coffin is lowered onto the hearse.

in the evening. He dressed in Highland costume, and appeared both jovial and intelligent. He had a large smile and a broad accent, and dressed in very broad cloth. A facetious author in *Funny Folks* magazine hoped he would emerge from Egyptian Hall worth his weight in gold. When interviewed by a journalist from the *Era* newspaper, Campbell said he had little liking for show business, but since he was now incapable of locomotion, there was nothing else for him. He also cracked a few jokes, however, saying that he should be considered a public benefactor, for having tested so many coach springs, to make sure they were fit for service. He also told the story of a very diminutive friend of his, who had been rebuffed with the words 'All one charge, big or little' when he asked a tailor for a reduction in the price for a suit. The little man then ordered two suits, one for himself, and one for his friend William Campbell!

Campbell remained in London throughout March and April, before exhibiting himself at the Paris Exposition. In May, after returning to Newcastle, he fell seriously ill; he expired on 26 May in his bedroom at the Duke of Wellington public house. There were obituaries in several newspapers, but the *Illustrated Police News* went one better: would it not be funny to reproduce a drawing of Campbell in Highland dress, and some illustrations of his funeral? Without any consideration of the family of the deceased, some lugubrious drawings were produced by the *IPN's* artists.

When the time had come for the Scottish Giant's funeral, the High Bridge area was completely thronged by curiosity-seekers who wanted to see the immense coffin. After the window had been removed and part of the wall demolished, it was hoisted up to the bedroom, where a number of strong men put Campbell's remains into it. Using a trolley, the coffin, now weighing nearly a ton, was carefully deposited onto the hearse. The procession started just after half past two in the afternoon: first came the Buffalo Band, playing 'Dead March from Saul', then 100 members of the Buffalo Society, a kind of down-market Freemasonry, of which Campbell had been a prominent member. The hearse was followed by five mourning coaches and a throng of mourners on foot. The windows and roofs of the houses along the route were crowded by spectators, some of whom had even climbed Gray's monument to see this bizarre funeral cortege. In Jesmond cemetery, more than 2,000 people had assembled, with an equal number standing in the road outside. After the coffin had been gingerly lowered into the grave, the vicar of Newcastle read the burial service. The Duke of Wellington public house was repaired after Campbell's coffin had been taken out; it appears still to be standing today, at No 18 High Bridge. According to an Internet account, which I wish I had remembered to verify during my latest visit to the watering-holes of Newcastle, the house has a plaque commemorating the Scottish Giant.

Whereas Daniel Lambert was weighed several times, the allegation that William Campbell was more than 52 stone in weight seems to rely only on his own testimony. Whether this estimate was correct, and whether he was really heavier than Lambert, remains entirely unclear. It would appear as if the Leicester phenomenon remained unchallenged well into very recent times. In 1905, the heaviest Briton alive weighed just 44 stone (279kg), and in 1980, Lambert's record still stood. But since that time, an epidemic of obesity has struck the world. Peter Yarnall, of East Ham, was said to have weighed 58 stone (368kg) when he died in 1984. Christopher McGarva, from Sleaford in Lincolnshire, was estimated to weigh 65 stone (413kg) when he expired in 2005. Football supporter Barry Austin, of Birmingham, was alleged to weigh 65 stone in 2009. In October the same year, Paul Mason, of Ipswich, weighed in at 70 stone (445kg) when transported to hospital in a specially strengthened ambulance.

reader info

how to subscribe

ANNUAL SUB of 12 issues (inc p&p) UK £39.98; EC £47.50; USA $79.99 ($143.98 for 24 issues); Rest of World £55.
Please see house ads in the latest issue for details of special offers.

North America (US & Canada)

Subscribers should contact: IMS. 3330 Pacific Avenue, Suite 404, Virginia Beach, VA 23454, USA. Tel: 888-428 6676. or 800-428 3003; Fax: 757 428 6253; Or order online at www.imsnews.com.

UK, Europe & rest of world

Major credit cards accepted. Cheques or money orders should be in sterling, preferably drawn on a London bank and made payable to Dennis Publishing. Mail to: **Fortean Times** Dovetail Services, 800 Guillat Avenue, Kent Science Park, Sittingbourne, ME9 8GU, UK. NB: This address should be used for orders and subscriptions only.
Telephone payments and queries: 0844 844 0049.
Fax payments and queries: 0844 815 0866.
E-mail payments and queries: ForteanTimes@servicehelpline.co.uk

how to submit

Dennis Publishing reserves all rights to reuse material submitted by *FT* readers and contributors in any medium or format.

Illustrations

Contact the art director by email (etienne@forteantimes.com) before sending samples of work. We cannot guarantee to respond to unsolicited work, though every effort will be made to do so.

Article submissions

Please send all submissions to David Sutton, Editor, Fortean Times, PO BOX 71602, London E17 0QD, UK or email drsuttton@forteantimes.com. As we receive a large volume of submissions, a decision may not be immediate. A contributors' guide is available at www.forteantimes.com.

Letters

Letters of comment or about experiences are welcome. Send to PO Box 2409, London NW5 4NP, UK or email sieveking@forteantimes.com. We reserve the right to edit submissions.

Books, periodicals, DVDs and other material for review

Send to: Fortean Times, PO BOX 71602, London E17 0QD, UK.

Caveat

FT aims to present the widest range of interpretations to stimulate discussion and welcomes helpful criticism. The opinions of contributors are not necessarily those of the editors. *FT* can take no responsibility for submissions, but will take all reasonable care of material in its possession. Requests for return of material should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope or an International Reply Coupon.

We occasionally use material that has been placed in the public domain. It is not always possible to identify the copyright holder. If you claim credit for something we've published, we'll be pleased to make acknowledgement.

Clippers wanted!

Regular clipsters have provided the lifeblood of *Fortean Times* since it began in 1973. One of the delights for the editors is receiving packets of clips from Borneo or Brazil, Saudi Arabia or Siberia. We invite you to join in the fun and send in anything weird, from trade journals, local newspapers, extracts from obscure tomes, or library newspaper archives.

To minimise the time spent on preparing clippings for a Fort Sort, we ask that you cut them out and not fold them too small. Mark each clip (on the front, where possible) with the source, date and your name, so that we can credit you in the listing (right) when we use the material. For UK local and overseas clips, please give the town of publication. For foreign language clips, we appreciate brief translations. To avoid confusion over day and month, please write the date in this form: 1 Feb 2013. If you send photocopies, copy on one side of the paper only.

Mail to: Fortean Times, PO Box 2409, London NW5 4NP, UK
E-mail: sieveking@forteantimes.com
or post on the FT website at www.forteantimes.co.uk, where there is a contributor's guide.

Why Fortean?

Fortean Times is a monthly magazine of news, reviews and research on strange phenomena and experiences, curiosities, prodigies and portents. It was founded by Bob Rickard in 1973 to continue the work of Charles Fort (1874–1932).

Born of Dutch stock in Albany, New York, Fort spent many years researching scientific literature in the New York Public Library and the British Museum Library. He marshalled his evidence and set forth his philosophy in *The Book of the Damned* (1919), *New Lands* (1923), *Lo!* (1931), and *Wild Talents* (1932).

He was sceptical of scientific explanations, observing how scientists argued according to their own beliefs rather than the rules of evidence and that inconvenient data were ignored, suppressed, discredited or explained away. He criticised modern science for its reductionism, its attempts to define, divide and separate. Fort's dictum "One measures a circle beginning anywhere" expresses instead his philosophy of Continuity in which everything is in an intermediate and transient state between extremes.

He had ideas of the Universe-as-organism and the transient nature of all apparent phenomena, coined the term 'teleportation', and was perhaps the first to speculate that mysterious lights seen in the sky might be craft from outer space. However, he cut at the very roots of credulity: "I conceive of nothing, in religion, science or philosophy, that is more than the proper thing to wear, for a while."

Fort was by no means the first person to collect anomalies and oddities – such collections have abounded from Greece to China since ancient times. **Fortean Times** keeps alive this ancient task of dispassionate weird-watching, exploring the wild frontiers between the known and the unknown.

From the viewpoint of mainstream science, its function is elegantly stated in a line from Enid Welsford's book on the mediæval fool: "The Fool does not lead a revolt against the Law; he lures us into a region of the spirit where... the writ does not run."

Besides being a journal of record, **FT** is also a forum for the discussion of observations and ideas, however absurd or unpopular, and maintains a position of benevolent scepticism towards both the orthodox and unorthodox.

FT toes no party line.

Special Correspondents

AUSTRALIA Graham Cordon (SA), Tony Healy (ACT), John Palazzi (NSW), Len Watson (Qld). **CANADA** Brian Chapman (BC), Graham Conway (BC). **CYBERSPACE** Richard Alexander, John F Callahan, Hugh Henry, Neil L Inglis, Michael Newton, Steve Scanlon. **ENGLAND** Gail-Nina Anderson, Louise Bath, Claire Blamey, Peter Christie, Mat Coward, Paul Farthing, George Featherston, Paul Gallagher, Alan Gardiner, Keith George, Anne Hardwick, Richard Lowke, Alexis Lykiard, Diana Lyons, Dave Malin, Nick Maloret, Valerie Martin, Tom Ruffles, Meryl Santis, Paul Screeton, Gary Stocker, Roman Suchyj, Frank Thomas, Paul Thomas, Nick Warren, Bobby Zodiac. **FINLAND** Heather Fowler. **FRANCE** Michel Meurger. **GERMANY** Ulrich Magin, Cliff Wren. **HOLLAND** Robin Pascoe. **IRELAND** Andy Conlon, Pat Corcoran, Andrew Munro. **ISRAEL** Zvi Ron. **NEW ZEALAND** Peter Hassall. **ROMANIA** Iosif Boczor. **SCOTLAND** Roger Musson, Leslie John Thomson. **SWEDEN** Sven Rosén. **THAILAND** Chris Williams. **USA** Loren Coleman (ME), Jim Conlan (CT), Myron Hoyt (ME), Dolores Phelps (TX), Jim Riecken (NY), Ron Rosenblatt (NY), Joseph Trainor (MA), Jeffrey Vallance (CA), Gary Yates (UT). **WALES** Janet & Colin Bord.

Fort Sorters (who classify clippings placed in the Archives for Fortean Research)

Phil Baker, Rachel Carthy, Steve Moore, Mark Pilkington, Bob Rickard, Paul Sieveking, Ian Simmons.

Clipping Credits for FT298

Richard Alexander, Gerard Apps, Helen Bate, Louise Bath, James Beckett, Lionel Beer, Peter Christie, Andy Conlon, Pat Corcoran, Graham Cordon, Emily Davies, Brian Duffy, Kate Eccles, John H Evans, Neil Ferguson, Alan Gardiner, Keith George, Alan Gibb, Anne Hardwick, Richard Heiden, Hugh Henry, Jenny Hillier, Kevin Hubbard, Colin Ings, Martyn P Jackson, Tony James, Bill & Louise Kelly, Diana Lyons, Dave Malin, Bert & Betty Gray-Malkin, Nick Maloret, John Morgan, Joseph Nemeth, John Palazzi, Adam Poole, Jim Price, Steve Scanlon, Paul Screeton, Amelia Shay, Roman Suchyj, Frank Thomas, Michael Thompson, Carole Tyrrell, Nick Warren, Len Watson, Owen Whiteoak, Bobby Zodiac, Zebbie Zubbeh.

PHENOMENOMIX Austin Osman Spare 2

HUNT EMERSON & KEVIN JACKSON

AUSTIN OSMAN SPARE WAS BORN INTO A POOR, WORKING CLASS LONDON FAMILY IN 1886. HE WAS AN ARTISTIC PRODIGY, AND THOUGH HE LEFT SCHOOL AT 13, HE HAD A PAINTING EXHIBITED AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY WHEN HE WAS JUST 17!

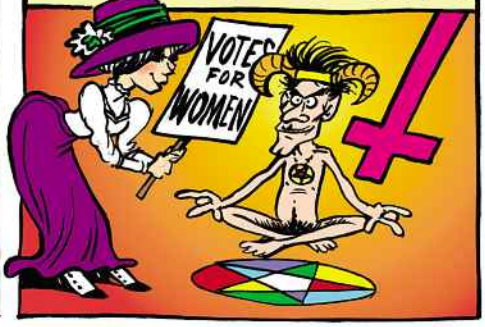
AT ABOUT THE SAME AGE, HE CLAIMED TO HAVE MET A "MRS. PATERSON" - AN OLD WITCH WHO HAD THE POWER TO TURN HERSELF INTO A SEDUCTIVE YOUNG WENCH!

MRS. P INTRODUCED HIM TO HIS TWO LIFELONG OBSESSIONS: SEX AND MAGIC!

BUT **AOS** DIDN'T NEED MAGIC TO MAKE A BIG SPLASH IN THE ART WORLD! REVIEWERS RAVED! HE WAS COMPARED TO THE LIKES OF **DÜRER** AND **WILLIAM BLAKE** ....

AND ONE CRITIC SAID HE WAS THE BEST IMAGINABLE ILLUSTRATOR FOR DANTE'S INFERNO!

AOS WAS BRIEFLY A STUDENT AT THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART, WHERE HIS BEST FRIEND WAS THE SUFFRAGETTE EMMELINE PANKHURST... AND WHERE IT WAS WHISPERED HE PRACTISED BLACK MAGIC!



INEVITABLY, THIS SOON DREW THE ATTENTION OF LONDON'S LEADING OCCULTIST...

THEY FIRST MET AT THE BRUTON GALLERY IN LONDON'S WEST END- IT DIDN'T TURN OUT QUITE AS CROWLEY HAD HOPED....

AOS BEGAN TO STUDY FOR ENTRY INTO CROWLEY'S MAGICKAL ORDER, BUT GREW BORED. THE CRUNCH CAME WHEN HE GAVE CROWLEY SOME CAKES MADE FROM DOGSHIT...

SPARE'S EXIT FROM THE ORDER FOLLOWED SOON AFTER...

NEXT TIME: WAR! SEX!! SURREALISM!!!

COMING NEXT MONTH

FAIRIES ON THE MERSEY

AN OUTBREAK OF LEPRECHAUNS AND UFOS IN 1960S LIVERPOOL

VAMPIRES OF ATLANTIS

SEARCHING FOR SECRETS ON THE ISLAND OF SANTORINI

+

CORNISH PISKIES OCCULTIST RABBIS, ALIEN ASTRONAUTS, AND MUCH MORE...

FORTEAN TIMES 299

ON SALE 28 FEBRUARY

HUGO PIETTE

TALES FROM THE VAULT

EACH MONTH WE SEND *FORTEAN TIMES* FOUNDER BOB RICKARD DOWN INTO THE DARKEST, COBWEB-RIDDEN DEPTHS OF THE VAULTS OF FORTEAN TOWERS IN SEARCH OF STORIES FROM *FT*'S PAST.

MARCH 1973

A curious story appeared in the national papers that the Derbyshire village of Breaston was being menaced by "suspicious" clouds. So much so that a petition, signed by local schoolchildren, implored the parish council to investigate why it was regularly overcast when, just a few miles away, there was brilliant sunshine. Council spokesman Reg Gill said they were looking into it and begun to worry about it themselves. "It has become particularly noticeable recently," he said. Blame was directed at a rather obvious target, a power station not too distant; but a statement from the Central Electricity Generating Board claimed the clouds of steam from their cooling towers were quickly dispersed by sunlight. As far as we know, the plight of Breaston was never resolved. **FT8:7**

MARCH 1983

Towards the end of this month a man was kidnapped in Madrid; whisked away by four men seen lurking outside his house. The 53-year-old victim, a banker with six children, was named as Diego Prado y Colon de Carvajal, a direct descendant of the explorer we know as Christopher Columbus. The following May, we noted that a direct descendent of the Renaissance political philosopher Niccolo Machiavelli, Countess Ludovica Machiavelli, 24, was kidnapped while she walked back to the family castle from evening school in San Lazzaro, outside Bologna. (Both were recovered alive after three months.) Was this a new class of crime, we asked? We'd love to learn of other abductions of descendants of the famous. **FT40:30**

MARCH 1993

A Tehran newspaper told a story of a goat, killed and cooked by the staff of a Muslim cleric in the southern Iranian town of Lamard. The goat's teeth were found to be coated by a 3mm layer of gold. It was said that there was a general belief that there was a particular kind of grass (presumably growing from gold-rich ground) that could deposit the precious metal on the teeth of the sheep that grazed upon it. The Reuters retelling of this story cites a scientist from Strathclyde University who supposed that ions of some kind might be responsible for the transfer from plant to teeth. We told a similar story from 1984 in *FT43*, set in the Patission suburb of Athens, with an Orthodox priest as the lucky diner. While scientists are pretty sceptical about the phenomenon, the belief in it is quite widespread. Similar stories have been reported from Australia, Carpathia and Crete. **FT43:14, 69:8**

MARCH 2003

"This has sent a spiritual shockwave through the Jewish community," said a Jewish lawyer in New York. He was referring to the appearance of a talking carp in the New Square Fish Market, which would be quite comic had it not been taken so seriously by some sections of that community. The piscine prophet was found by Luis Nivelo, an Ecuadorian fish-cutter, who pulled the fish out of an icy crate. He was about to club its head when it said something he couldn't understand. Whether it was due to the unintelligibility of this utterance or its unexpectedness, he shot backwards in shock and slipped among the slimy packing crates. Screaming "The fish is talking!" Nivelo ran to his boss Zalman Rosen, whose family owns the business. "It's the devil! The devil is here!" Nivelo shouted as he pulled Rosen away from a phone call. "Zalman said to me 'You crazy; you a meshuggeneh [nutter]'", he added.

Rosen, however, and another worker, both testified to hearing the fish speak. Rosen later told Jewish periodicals that it prophesied in Hebrew, commanding him to pray and study the Torah "because the end is near". He also said the voice identified itself as a deceased former client, a Canadian Hasid, who regularly bought carp to feed the poor, and who had returned to perform tikkun (healing). When this news spread through the 7,000 members of the Skver sect, to whom Rosen belonged, and into the Hasidic community worldwide, discussions ranged from Talmudic wrangling to ribaldry. One gefilte fish manufacturer joked that he was changing his slogan to "Our fish speaks for itself". Others saw it as an omen of the impending war in Iraq, the old Babylon. Still others thought it was a Jewish Purim festival prank.

What happened to the fish? Apparently, Rosen was so overwhelmed by the revelation that he accidentally slashed his hand with the knife he carried and was rushed to hospital. The fish fell back into the crate, joining its companions in the icy slush. Having said its piece it kept schtum. It was said that attempts to identify it proved fruitless and it was processed into gefilte. **FT171:8-9**

Why Not Be A Writer?

What our students say:

"**So far, I have had eighteen novels published!** The Writers Bureau helped make this possible for me. Within six months of enrolling on my course I was having work commissioned by editors and I still work regularly for magazines."
AWARD WINNING WRITER
Christina Jones, Oxfordshire

"I thought you'd like to know that seven years since doing my course at WB I've been published in more than **150 magazines** around the world. I've now got to the stage where I'm turning down all-inclusive exotic press trips!"
Cindy-Lou Dale, Kent

"Completing The Writers Bureau course has made it possible for me to attain my life-long ambition of becoming a published writer. The level of success I have achieved has far outweighed what I was hoping for when beginning the course. I have now had **seventeen books published with two more under publication** at the moment."
Michael Foley, Essex

"The amount of hours I have been able to work have been limited but I have earned approx **£3,500** from my writing this year. I now regularly sell articles and am working on a book proposal."
Jane Redfern-Jones.

"I've had **30 pieces** of work accepted by various publications since I started my Writers Bureau course – a mere 18 months ago.

"I contemplate that fact and I am amazed to have come so far in such a short time, especially when I consider the severe restrictions on the time I have available for writing. I usually manage about three hours per week, if I'm lucky."
Chris Green, Lincolnshire

"I have earned **£2,500** this past year, mainly from commissioned pieces. I am now regularly being published and am still only half way through the course."
Marie Barbieri.

Being a writer can offer you a second income, extra spending money or even be a full-time career. It's your choice. But whatever your writing ambitions we have a course that will help you to achieve them.

That's because our first-class home-study creative writing course contains all you need to know to become a successful, published writer. You learn how to write articles, short stories, novels, TV, radio, drama and more. You are shown how to develop your writing style, present your manuscripts, contact editors, find markets and HOW TO SELL YOUR WORK.

What's more, **you do not need any previous writing experience** to succeed on the course as it's suitable for the absolute beginner.

Throughout the course you will be tutored by a professional writer, who will offer constructive feedback on your twenty marked assignments. In addition, you can count on the support of our dedicated Student Services team who will do all they can to ensure that you get the most out of your studies.

When you enrol, your full course is sent to you on a fifteen day trial. Your studies are then flexible to your requirements as you have four years to complete your course. Moreover, **we offer you a full refund guarantee**. If you do not earn back the equivalent of your fees by the time you finish your course we will refund them in full.

So, if you would like to learn to earn from writing, try our risk-free course. For a free prospectus visit our website or call our freephone number today!

www.writersbureau.com

FREE CALL 24 ☎ HRS **0800 856 2008**

Save £30 Quote AT

Please send me FREE details of how to become a published writer:

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

_____ Postcode: _____

Email: _____

Freepost RSSK-JZAC-JCJG
The Writers Bureau Ltd
Dept AT31113, Manchester, M3 1LE

Writers Bureau 24 Years of Success

Members of The British Institute for Learning and Development and ABCC

Enrol online to access your course modules TODAY at: www.writersbureau.com

"...IMPECCABLE, DARING AND UNDOUBTEDLY REMARKABLE..."
★★★★ -BLOODY DISGUSTING

"SMART, INTENSE, AND UNPREDICTABLE"
★★★★ -DREAD CENTRAL

"MARTIN MEETS LET THE RIGHT ONE IN"
★★★★ -DARKSIDE

AUDIENCE AWARD FOR BEST FEATURE
MILE HIGH HORROR FESTIVAL

BEST FEATURE
ANOTHER HOLE IN THE HEAD

SILVER RAVEN
BRUSSELS FANTASTIC FILM FESTIVAL

MIDNIGHT SON

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF
THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT

ON DVD 11TH FEB 2013

MONSTER Pictures

MIDNIGHTSON.CO.UK

zavvi.com